

POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH REGULATIONS

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Regulations for the Degree of Master of Philosophy

These Regulations govern the award of the degree of Master of Philosophy at Aberystwyth University, henceforth the University. They apply equally to the degree of LLM by Research.

The degree of Master of Philosophy may be awarded by the University in recognition of the successful completion of a course of further study and research, the results of which are judged to constitute a critical evaluation and analysis of a body of knowledge and/or an original contribution to knowledge.

On completion of an MPhil, graduates will have attained at least Level M, as defined by the QAA's Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Modes of Study

1. A candidate may study for the degree by one of the following methods:

A by pursuing full-time research in the University;

B by pursuing full-time research in an external place of employment;

C by pursuing part-time research in the University;

D by pursuing part-time research externally;

E by pursuing part-time research in the University as a full-time or a part-time member of staff.

2. It is possible, in appropriate cases, to transfer from one method of the regulations to another, e.g., from full-time (Method A) to part-time (Method C) and vice-versa. In such cases the University will determine a revised minimum period of study and will fix the earliest date for the submission of the thesis.

3. In the case of part-time members of staff, candidature is restricted to contracted members of staff in possession of a degree, or equivalent qualification, holding a regular contract of salaried employment equivalent to at least one-third of that of a full-time member in the appropriate categories of staff.

Eligibility

4. A candidate for the degree of MPhil must hold one of the following qualifications prior to commencement of research:

- (a) an initial degree of Aberystwyth University ;
- (b) an initial degree of another University approved for this purpose;
- (c) a non-graduate qualification which the University has deemed to be equivalent to graduation.

A prospective candidate who already holds a doctoral degree must be able to show that the MPhil scheme is in a different field or research from that for which the PhD (or other doctoral degree) was awarded.

5. Irrespective of a candidate's qualifications, the University must satisfy itself that a candidate is of the required academic standard to complete the scheme of research proposed.

6. All candidates are required to matriculate with the University. The University provides a list of approved standards which will permit entry to candidature for a higher degree of the University. This list is contained in "Regulations for the Approval of Qualifications and/or Relevant Experience for Admission to Higher Degrees, Diplomas and Certificates of Aberystwyth University".

A special recommendation for the admission of a candidate who does not possess a recognised entry qualification must be made by the Department concerned to the Postgraduate Admissions Office and approval must be confirmed before the candidate's proposed scheme of study is due to begin.

Registration Periods

7. A candidate must enrol as either a full-time or a part-time student of the University, pay the appropriate fee prescribed and pursue the scheme for the minimum period defined below:

Methods A and B:

Minimum period: one year

Methods C, D and E:

Minimum period: two years

Notwithstanding the above, the Department may require a candidate to pursue research for longer than these minimum periods.

8. In order to allow for the examination to be completed, a one-year candidate may submit a thesis, at the earliest, two weeks before the expiry of the period of study. A two-year candidate may submit a thesis, at the earliest, six months before the expiry of the period of study, i.e. one and a half years from the date of initial registration. Tuition fees will nevertheless be liable for the full registration period.

Where an additional period of research is required of a candidate (as described under paragraph 7 above), the candidate's earliest submission date is extended by a period of time equal in length to the duration of the additional period of study.

Time Limits

9. A candidature shall lapse if a thesis is not submitted, in the form and manner prescribed by regulation, by the following time-limits:

(a) Methods A and B - two years from the official beginning of the candidate's period of study as a research student, as prescribed in paragraph 6, above.

(b) Methods C, D and E - four years from the official beginning of the candidate's period of study as a research student, as prescribed in paragraph 6, above

The above time-limits may be extended by the University, but in exceptional cases only and in accordance with criteria laid down in the Regulations for the Submission and Examination of Research Degree Theses. A reasoned application, supported by appropriate independent evidence, must be submitted by the candidate's department for consideration by the University.

NB For students admitted from September 2018, the following maximum Time Limits for Completion, including any periods of temporary withdrawal and extensions approved by the Head of the Doctoral Academy, apply:

From initial registration date to the first submission of the thesis for examination:

Full-time MPhil/LLM Research: four years

Part-time MPhil/LLM Research: six years

Extensions to these limits may be granted by the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research) provided that:

1. Evidence of special circumstances is supplied
2. The Student's department confirms that the research project remains current and viable and that the student is capable of completing the project within the requested extension.

Supervision

10. The University shall ensure that candidates are supervised, on a regular and continuing basis, in accordance with its general procedures for postgraduate supervision.

11. For each candidature, the University shall approve a supervisory team including a minimum of one main supervisor and a second supervisor nominated by the candidate's Department.

- The main supervisor will normally be a full-time member of the academic staff of the University;
- The second supervisor will normally be a full-time member academic staff of the University or collaborative institution or organisation.

The procedures for postgraduate supervision shall be made available by the University to students and supervisors through the Codes of Practice and Supervisors' Handbook.

Thesis Length and Submission

12. Every candidate's research shall be completed by the presentation of a thesis (normally not exceeding 60,000 words in length, excluding references and appendices) which embodies the results of the research, within the time-limits specified.

13. A properly constituted Examining Board is required to conduct an oral examination of an MPhil candidate who submits a thesis for examination. This requirement might, however, be waived at the discretion of the Examining Board, when an examination of a re-submitted thesis is being conducted and the examiners are recommending a clear pass without amendments, or with only very minor corrections or amendments. In

other, exceptional circumstances, a viva for a resubmission may be waived with the approval of the Examining Board and the Head of the Doctoral Academy.

14. Candidates shall sign a declaration to certify that the work submitted has not been accepted in substance for any degree or award, and is not being submitted concurrently in candidature for any degree or other award. The signed declaration shall be included in all copies of the works submitted for examination.

15. The University shall ensure that the form of submission and examination of the thesis conform to the University's "Regulations for the Submission and Examination of Research Theses".

Degree Schemes in the Creative Arts

16. In the case of candidates following approved research degree schemes which fall within the University's subject area of Creative and Performing Arts, the thesis may take one or more of the following forms: artefacts, score, text, portfolio of original works, performance or exhibition. The submission shall be accompanied by commentary placing it in its academic context together with any other items which may be required (e.g. a catalogue or audio or visual recording).

In all cases the submission and written commentary shall be bound, and other required items (e.g. tape or other media) shall be enclosed in a container suitable for storage on a library shelf and shall carry the same information on the spine as is required for dissertations/theses. This information shall be placed so as to be readily readable from the container in its stored position.

Regulations for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy (Approved for entry pre- September 2023)

These Regulations govern the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at Aberystwyth University, henceforth the University.

The degree of Doctor of Philosophy may be awarded by the University in recognition of the successful completion of a scheme of further study and research, the results of which are judged to constitute an original contribution to learning and to give evidence of systematic study and of ability to relate the results of such study to the general body of knowledge in the subject.

References below to the thesis shall encompass alternative format submissions (see regulations 18-28 below) and practice-based submissions in creative arts (see regulation 17).

In judging the merit of a thesis submitted in candidature for the degree of PhD, the examiners shall bear in mind the standard and scope of work which it is reasonable to expect a capable and diligent student to present after a period of two or three years (as appropriate) of full-time study, or its part-time equivalent.

On completion of a Doctoral Degree, graduates will have attained Level D, as defined by the QAA's Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

The degree of Doctor of Philosophy may not be conferred *honoris causa*.

Modes of Study

1. A candidate may study for the degree by one of the following methods:

A - by pursuing full-time research in the University;

B - by pursuing full-time research in an external place of employment;

C - by pursuing part-time research in the University;

D - by pursuing part-time research externally;

E - by pursuing part-time research in the University as a full-time or a part-time member of staff.

Students applying under section B should be employed at an external research centre or similar organisation which has the staff and the facilities to host and supervise the research project but which lacks degree awarding powers. Applicants must provide:

- **a declaration of support from the employer confirming that they will allow the student to work full-time on the research project and will provide the required facilities.**
- **confirmation of supervision arrangements including the CV of the local supervisor.**
- **confirmation that the candidate has, or can obtain, the requisite research skills without attending AU research training.**
- **agreement on any AU research training that will be required.**

2. It is possible, in appropriate cases, to transfer from one method of the regulations to another, e.g., from full-time (Method A) to part-time (Method C) and vice-versa. In such cases the University will determine a revised minimum period of study and will fix the earliest date for the submission of the thesis.

3. In the case of part-time members of staff, candidature is restricted to contracted members of staff in possession of a degree, or equivalent qualification, holding a regular contract of salaried employment equivalent to at least one-third of that of a full-time member in the appropriate categories of staff.

Eligibility

4. A candidate for the degree of PhD must hold one of the following qualifications prior to commencement of research:

- (a) an initial degree of Aberystwyth University;
- (b) an initial degree of another University approved for this purpose;
- (c) a non-graduate qualification which the University has deemed to be equivalent to graduation.

A prospective candidate who already holds a doctoral degree must be able to show that the PhD scheme is in a different field or research from that for which the PhD (or other doctoral degree) was awarded.

5. Irrespective of a candidate's qualifications, the University must satisfy itself that a candidate is of the required academic standard to complete the scheme of research proposed.

6. All candidates are required to matriculate with the University. The University provides a list of approved standards which will permit entry to candidature for a higher degree of the University. This list is contained in "Regulations for the Approval of Qualifications and/or Relevant Experience for Admission to Higher Degrees, Diplomas and Certificates of Aberystwyth University".

A special recommendation for the admission of a candidate who does not possess a recognised entry qualification must be made by the Department concerned to the Postgraduate Admissions Office and approval must be confirmed before the candidate's proposed scheme of study is due to begin.

Registration Periods and Probationary Arrangements

7. A candidate must enrol at the University, pay the appropriate fee prescribed and pursue the scheme of research for the minimum period defined below:

Methods A and B:

Minimum period: three years, the first year of which shall be regarded as the probationary year

Method C and D:

Minimum period: five years, the first two years of which shall be regarded as the probationary year.

Method E:

Minimum period: three years, the first year of which shall be regarded as the probationary year.

Notwithstanding the above, the Department may require a candidate to pursue research for longer than these minimum periods.

8. In order to allow for the examination to be completed, a candidate is permitted to submit a thesis six months before the expiry of scheme of study approved. Tuition fees will nevertheless be liable for the full registration period. Where an additional period of research is required of a candidate (as described under paragraph 7 above), the candidate's earliest submission date is extended by a period of time equal in length to the duration of the additional period of study.

9. During the probationary year/period, the candidate will be expected to demonstrate their ability to proceed with further research.

10. Notwithstanding paragraphs 6 and 8 above, a candidate may be granted exemption from the probationary year/period where they:

(a) holds the postgraduate degree of Master of an approved University obtained by research or advanced study which, in the judgement of the department/Faculty, provides sufficient academic background to permit the completion of the proposed research within two years.

(b) has completed a minimum of one year's full-time or two years' part-time supervised postgraduate work in the same academic discipline as the proposed PhD scheme of research to the satisfaction of the University on the recommendation of the appropriate department/Faculty.

(c) has submitted postgraduate research work of a standard approximate to that of a Master's degree and approved by the University on the recommendation of the appropriate Department/Faculty.

(d) has had at least one year's relevant experience since graduation, such approval to be granted by the University on the recommendation of the appropriate Department/Faculty.

Those Universities whose Master's degrees are approved for the purposes of exemption from the probationary period are listed in "Regulations for the Approval of Qualifications and/or Relevant Experience for Admission to Higher Degrees, Diplomas and Certificates of Aberystwyth University".

No other exemptions will be given.

Time Limits

11. A candidature shall lapse if a thesis is not submitted, in the form and manner prescribed, by the time-limit listed below:

Methods A and B:

In the case of three-year candidatures (the first year of which is regarded as the probationary year) four years from the official beginning of the candidate's period of study.

In the case of two year candidatures (where the candidate has been exempted from the probationary year) three years from the official beginning of the candidate's period of study.

Methods C and D:

In the case of five-year candidatures (the first two years of which are regarded as the probationary period) seven years from the official beginning of the candidate's period of study.

In the case of three year candidatures (where the candidate has been exempted from the probationary period) five years from the official beginning of the candidate's period of study.

Method E:

In all cases, seven years from the official beginning of the candidate's period of study.

The above time-limits may be extended by the University, but in exceptional cases only and in accordance with criteria laid down in the Regulations for the Submission and Examination of Research Degree Theses. A reasoned application, supported by appropriate independent evidence, must be submitted by the candidate's department for consideration by the University.

NB For students admitted from September 2018, the following maximum Time Limits for Completion, including any periods of temporary withdrawal and extensions approved by the Head of the Doctoral Academy, apply:

From initial registration date to the first submission of the thesis for examination:

Full-time PhD/PhDFA: six years

Part-time PhD/PhDFA: nine years

Extensions to these limits may be granted by the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research) provided that:

1. Evidence of special circumstances is supplied
2. The Student's department confirms that the research project remains current and viable and that the student is capable of completing the project within the requested extension.

Supervision

12. The University shall ensure that candidates are supervised, on a regular and continuing basis, in accordance with its general procedures for postgraduate supervision.

13. For each candidature, the University shall approve a supervisory team including a minimum of one main supervisor and a second supervisor nominated by the candidate's Department.

- The main supervisor will normally be a full-time member of the academic staff of the University;
- The second supervisor will normally be a full-time member academic staff of the University or collaborative institution or organisation.

The procedures for postgraduate supervision shall be made available by the University to students and supervisors through the Codes of Practice and Supervisors' Handbook.

Thesis Length and Submission

14. Every candidate's research shall be completed by the presentation of a thesis (a maximum of 100,000 words in length, excluding appendices and references) which embodies the methods and results of the research. A properly constituted Examining Board is required to conduct an oral examination of a PhD candidate who submits a thesis for examination. This requirement might, however, be waived at the discretion of the Examining Board, when an examination of a re-submitted thesis is being conducted and the examiners are recommending a clear pass without amendments, or with only

very minor corrections or amendments. In other, exceptional circumstances, a viva for a resubmission may be waived with the approval of the Examining Board and the Head of the Doctoral Academy.

15. Candidates shall sign a declaration to certify that the work submitted has not been accepted in substance for any degree or award, and is not being submitted concurrently in candidature for any degree or other award. The signed declaration shall be included in all copies of the works submitted for examination.

16. The University shall ensure that the form of submission and examination of the thesis conform to the University's 'Regulations for the Submission and Examination of Research Theses'.

Special provisions relating to Schemes in the Creative Arts

17. In the case of candidates following approved research degree schemes which fall within the University's subject area of Creative and Performing Arts, the thesis may take one or more of the following forms: artefacts, score, text, portfolio of original works, performance or exhibition. The submission shall be accompanied by commentary placing it in its academic context together with any other items which may be required (e.g. a catalogue or audio or visual recording).

In all cases the submission and written commentary shall be bound, and other required items (e.g. tape or other media) shall be enclosed in a container suitable for storage on a library shelf and shall carry the same information on the spine as is required for dissertations/theses. This information shall be placed so as to be readily readable from the container in its stored position.

Alternative format submission

18. The alternative format allows a doctoral candidate to incorporate material that is in a format suitable for submission for publication in a peer-reviewed journal. Apart from the inclusion of such materials, the alternative format thesis must conform to the same regulations that govern the standard PhD thesis. The criteria for the award and the standard that must be achieved will also be the same as for the standard PhD.

Candidates who wish to present their work in the alternative format must follow the guidance below.

19. Materials included in the alternative format thesis may include those which are solely and/or partly authored by the student and may be already published, accepted for publication, or submitted for publication in externally refereed contexts such as journals and conference proceedings.

20. The thesis should remain an original contribution to the field of research by the student, regardless of the format. A clear statement must be made at the outset of the thesis to explain and justify in full the nature and extent of the candidate's own contribution and the contribution of any co-authors and other collaborators to the publications presented. The co-authors or collaborators must sign declarations confirming this. The researched materials should be derived from original research undertaken after the date the student initially registered with the University.

21. Any candidate wishing to submit their thesis in alternative format must submit a written request, giving an outline of the proposed thesis structure to their supervisor and appropriate Postgraduate Monitoring Committee for approval. This request must be submitted before the end of year two for full time candidates and the end of year four for part time candidates. The request should specify why the alternative format thesis is more appropriate for the research project and demonstrate how the candidate will take full advantage of the alternative format. If approval is granted for submission in alternative format, the student must obtain the Permission to submit a PhD thesis in alternative format form from the appropriate office. Students must submit the form with their thesis.

22. The number of papers included in the alternative format thesis may vary according to discipline but will normally be between three and five. The papers should reflect the quantity, quality and originality of research and analysis expected of a candidate submitting a standard doctoral thesis.

23. The papers must constitute a body of knowledge within a coherent and continuous thesis, rather than a series of disconnected publications. As such, any publications

should be adapted and integrated within the structure of the thesis. Any sections of the thesis which are published or in publishable format should be clearly identified.

24. Any work submitted within the alternative format thesis must be substantially different from any work which may have previously been submitted for any degree at this or any other institution.

25. It is essential that the alternative format thesis includes detailed and critical analysis of the work and methods used, since sections formatted for publication/dissemination may not already include this level of detail. The structure of the alternative format thesis should include the following:

I. All required pages for a standard thesis submission detailed in the PhD submission guidance notes

II. A rationale for submitting the thesis in an alternative format and an account of how the thesis format has been constructed

III. A written context for the research, which should incorporate sections/chapters of up to 20,000 words in total defining the rationale for the research and the strategy employed during the research as demonstrated in the thesis. The context section/chapters should include a summary of each publication submitted; an outline of their interrelationship, including a synthesis of the work as demonstrated by the publications as a complete coherent study; a summary of the research aims, objectives, methodology, results and conclusions covered by the submitted work; a critical reflection of the research methodology and methods; a critical review of the significant and original contribution the work makes to the academic field in question; and a demonstration of the original and independent contribution to knowledge and a rationale to prove at least equivalence to that normally demonstrated by the submission of a thesis

IV. A written review of previous research including sections summarising and synthesising previous research in the field of investigation

V. A written methodology detailing the methods employed during the research and a detailed critical analysis of those methods and the information they provided

VI. Presentation of results and their analysis in a format suitable for presentation in a peer-reviewed journal and/or in conventional thesis chapters as in the standard PhD

thesis

VII. A summary/conclusion drawing together the various outcomes of the work into a coherent synthesis and indicating directions for future work

VIII. References and appendices as in the standard PhD thesis

26. The incorporation of publication-style chapters in the thesis may lead to some duplication since each publication-style chapter may have self-contained components that might overlap with parts of the other sections of the thesis. Nevertheless, the maximum length of the alternative format doctoral thesis should not normally exceed that of the standard thesis.

27. As with the standard doctoral thesis, examiners should satisfy themselves that the alternative format thesis meets the requirements of the doctoral degree as prescribed in the appropriate regulations and policies. The fact that a thesis contains material that has been published or accepted for publication does not guarantee that the examiners will recommend the award for which the candidate is being examined.

28. The publication of research papers in journals may incur financial costs; for example for journal page charges, payment costs for publishing in “Open-Access” journals or colour reproduction costs. The student must be made aware of these potential financial costs by the supervisory team at the time when the decision is made to produce an Alternative Format thesis.

Regulations for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy (Approved for entry from September 2023)

These Regulations govern the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at Aberystwyth University, henceforth the University.

The degree of Doctor of Philosophy may be awarded by the University in recognition of the successful completion of a scheme of further study and research, the results of which are judged to constitute an original contribution to learning and to give evidence of systematic study and of ability to relate the results of such study to the general body of knowledge in the subject.

References below to the thesis shall encompass alternative format submissions (see regulations 17-27 below) and practice-based submissions in creative arts (see regulation 16).

In judging the merit of a thesis submitted in candidature for the degree of PhD, the examiners shall bear in mind the standard and scope of work which it is reasonable to expect a capable and diligent student to present after a period of three to four years of full-time study, or its part-time equivalent.

On completion of a Doctoral Degree, graduates will have attained Level D, as defined by the QAA's Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Modes of Study

1. A candidate may study for the degree by one of the following methods:

A - by pursuing full-time research in the University;

B - by pursuing full-time research in an external place of employment;

C - by pursuing part-time research in the University or externally.

Students applying under section B should be employed at an external research centre or similar organisation which has the staff and the facilities to host and supervise the research project but which lacks degree awarding powers. Applicants must provide:

- a declaration of support from the employer confirming that they will allow the student to work full-time on the research project and will provide the required facilities.
- confirmation of supervision arrangements including the CV of the local supervisor.
- confirmation that the candidate has, or can obtain, the requisite research skills without attending AU research training.
- agreement on any AU research training that will be required.

2. It is possible, in appropriate cases, to transfer from one method of the regulations to another, e.g., from full-time (Method A) to part-time (Method C) and vice-versa. In such cases the University will determine a revised minimum period of study and will fix the earliest date for the submission of the thesis.

Eligibility

3. A candidate for the degree of PhD must hold one of the following qualifications prior to commencement of research:

- (a) an initial degree of Aberystwyth University;
- (b) an initial degree of another University approved for this purpose;
- (c) a non-graduate qualification which the University has deemed to be equivalent to graduation.

Departments may set additional requirements such as achievement of a certain class of degree or possession of a Master's award.

A prospective candidate who already holds a doctoral degree must be able to show that the PhD scheme is in a different field or research from that for which the PhD (or other doctoral degree) was awarded.

4. Irrespective of a candidate's qualifications, the University must satisfy itself that a candidate is of the required academic standard to complete the scheme of research proposed. This may involve requiring the candidate to provide a portfolio of creative or

other writing, and interviewing candidates to assess their understanding of the research proposal.

5. All candidates are required to matriculate with the University. The University provides a list of approved standards which will permit entry to candidature for a higher degree of the University. This list is contained in “Regulations for the Approval of Qualifications and/or Relevant Experience for Admission to Higher Degrees, Diplomas and Certificates of Aberystwyth University”.

A special recommendation for the admission of a candidate who does not possess a recognised entry qualification must be made by the Department concerned to the Postgraduate Admissions Office and approval must be confirmed before the candidate's proposed scheme of study is due to begin.

Registration Periods and Probationary Arrangements

6. A candidate must enrol at the University, pay the appropriate fee prescribed and pursue the scheme of research for the minimum period defined below:

Methods A and B:

Minimum period: three years, the first year of which shall be regarded as the probationary year.

Method C:

Minimum period: six years, the first two years of which shall be regarded as the probationary year.

Notwithstanding the above, the Department may require a candidate to pursue research for longer than these minimum periods.

7. In order to allow for the examination to be completed, a candidate is permitted to submit a thesis six months before the expiry of scheme of study approved. Tuition fees will nevertheless be liable for the full registration period. Where an additional period of research is required of a candidate (as described under paragraph 6 above), the candidate's earliest submission date is extended by a period of time equal in length to the duration of the additional period of study.

8. During the probationary year/period, the candidate will be expected to demonstrate their ability to proceed with further research.

9. Notwithstanding paragraphs 5 and 7 above, a candidate may be granted exemption from the probationary year/period where they:

(a) hold the postgraduate degree of Master of an approved University obtained by research or advanced study which, in the judgement of the department/Faculty, provides sufficient academic background to permit the completion of the proposed research within two years.

(b) have completed a minimum of one year's full-time or two years' part-time supervised postgraduate work in the same academic discipline as the proposed PhD scheme of research to the satisfaction of the University on the recommendation of the appropriate department/Faculty.

(c) has submitted postgraduate research work of a standard approximate to that of a Master's degree and approved by the University on the recommendation of the appropriate Department/Faculty.

(d) has had at least one year's relevant experience since graduation, such approval to be granted by the University on the recommendation of the appropriate Department/Faculty.

Those Universities whose Master's degrees are approved for the purposes of exemption from the probationary period are listed in "Regulations for the Approval of Qualifications and/or Relevant Experience for Admission to Higher Degrees, Diplomas and Certificates of Aberystwyth University".

No other exemptions will be given.

Time Limits

10. A candidature shall lapse if a thesis is not submitted, in the form and manner prescribed, by the time-limit listed below:

Methods A and B:

Four years from the official beginning of the candidate's period of study, or, where the candidate has been exempted from the probationary year, three years from the official beginning of the candidate's period of study.

Method C:

Eight years from the official beginning of the candidate's period of study, or, where the candidate has been exempted from the probationary period, six years from the official beginning of the candidate's period of study.

The above time-limits may be extended by the University, but in exceptional cases only and in accordance with criteria laid down in the Regulations for the Submission and Examination of Research Degree Theses. A reasoned application, supported by appropriate independent evidence, must be submitted by the candidate's department for consideration by the University.

NB For students admitted from September 2018, the following maximum Time Limits for Completion, including any periods of temporary withdrawal and extensions approved by the Head of the Doctoral Academy, apply:

From initial registration date to the first submission of the thesis for examination:

Full-time PhD/PhDFA: six years

Part-time PhD/PhDFA: ten years

Extensions to these limits may be granted by the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research) provided that:

1. Evidence of special circumstances is supplied
2. The student's department confirms that the research project remains current and viable and that the student is capable of completing the project within the requested extension.

Supervision

11. The University shall ensure that candidates are supervised, on a regular and continuing basis, in accordance with its general procedures for postgraduate supervision.

12. Each candidature shall have a supervisory team including a minimum of one main supervisor and a second supervisor nominated by the candidate's Department.

- The main supervisor will normally be a member of the academic staff of the University;
- The second supervisor will normally be a member academic staff of the University or collaborative institution or organisation.

The procedures for postgraduate supervision shall be made available by the University to students and supervisors through the Codes of Practice and Supervisors' Handbook.

Thesis Length and Submission

13. Every candidate's research shall be completed by the presentation of a thesis (a maximum of 100,000 words in length, excluding appendices and references) which embodies the methods and results of the research. A properly constituted Examining Board is required to conduct an oral examination of a PhD candidate who submits a thesis for examination. This requirement might, however, be waived at the discretion of the Examining Board, when an examination of a re-submitted thesis is being conducted and the examiners are recommending a clear pass without amendments, or with only very minor corrections or amendments. In other, exceptional circumstances, a viva for a resubmission may be waived with the approval of the Examining Board and the Head of the Doctoral Academy.

14. Candidates shall sign a declaration to certify that the work submitted has not been accepted in substance for any degree or award, and is not being submitted concurrently in candidature for any degree or other award. The signed declaration shall be included in all copies of the works submitted for examination.

15. The University shall ensure that the form of submission and examination of the thesis conform to the University's 'Regulations for the Submission and Examination of Research Theses'.

Special provisions relating to Schemes in the Creative Arts

16. In the case of candidates following approved research degree schemes which fall within the University's subject area of Creative and Performing Arts, the thesis may take one or more of the following forms: artefacts, score, text, portfolio of original works, performance or exhibition. The submission shall be accompanied by commentary placing it in its academic context together with any other items which may be required (e.g. a catalogue or audio or visual recording).

In all cases the submission and written commentary shall be bound, and other required items (e.g. tape or other media) shall be enclosed in a container suitable for storage on a library shelf and shall carry the same information on the spine as is required for dissertations/theses. This information shall be placed so as to be readily readable from the container in its stored position.

Alternative format submission

17. The alternative format allows a doctoral candidate to incorporate material that is in a format suitable for submission for publication in a peer-reviewed journal. Apart from the inclusion of such materials, the alternative format thesis must conform to the same regulations that govern the standard PhD thesis. The criteria for the award and the standard that must be achieved will also be the same as for the standard PhD.

Candidates who wish to present their work in the alternative format must follow the guidance below.

18. Materials included in the alternative format thesis may include those which are solely and/or partly authored by the student and may be already published, accepted for publication, or submitted for publication in externally refereed contexts such as journals and conference proceedings.

19. The thesis should remain an original contribution to the field of research by the student, regardless of the format. A clear statement must be made at the outset of the thesis to explain and justify in full the nature and extent of the candidate's own contribution and the contribution of any co-authors and other collaborators to the publications presented. The co-authors or collaborators must sign declarations confirming this. The researched materials should be derived from original research undertaken after the date the student initially registered with the University.

20. Any candidate wishing to submit their thesis in alternative format must submit a written request, giving an outline of the proposed thesis structure to their supervisor and appropriate Postgraduate Monitoring Committee for approval. This request must be submitted before the end of year two for full time candidates and the end of year four for part time candidates. The request should specify why the alternative format thesis is more appropriate for the research project and demonstrate how the candidate will take full advantage of the alternative format. If approval is granted for submission in alternative format, the student must obtain the Permission to submit a PhD thesis in alternative format form from the appropriate office. Students must submit the form with their thesis.

21. The number of papers included in the alternative format thesis may vary according to discipline but will normally be between three and five. The papers should reflect the quantity, quality and originality of research and analysis expected of a candidate submitting a standard doctoral thesis.

22. The papers must constitute a body of knowledge within a coherent and continuous thesis, rather than a series of disconnected publications. As such, any publications should be adapted and integrated within the structure of the thesis. Any sections of the thesis which are published or in publishable format should be clearly identified.

23. Any work submitted within the alternative format thesis must be substantially different from any work which may have previously been submitted for any degree at this or any other institution.

24. It is essential that the alternative format thesis includes detailed and critical analysis of the work and methods used, since sections formatted for publication/dissemination may not already include this level of detail. The structure of the alternative format thesis should include the following:

I. All required pages for a standard thesis submission detailed in the PhD submission guidance notes

II. A rationale for submitting the thesis in an alternative format and an account of how the thesis format has been constructed

III. A written context for the research, which should incorporate sections/chapters of up

to 20,000 words in total defining the rationale for the research and the strategy employed during the research as demonstrated in the thesis. The context section/chapters should include a summary of each publication submitted; an outline of their interrelationship, including a synthesis of the work as demonstrated by the publications as a complete coherent study; a summary of the research aims, objectives, methodology, results and conclusions covered by the submitted work; a critical reflection of the research methodology and methods; a critical review of the significant and original contribution the work makes to the academic field in question; and a demonstration of the original and independent contribution to knowledge and a rationale to prove at least equivalence to that normally demonstrated by the submission of a thesis

IV. A written review of previous research including sections summarising and synthesising previous research in the field of investigation

V. A written methodology detailing the methods employed during the research and a detailed critical analysis of those methods and the information they provided

VI. Presentation of results and their analysis in a format suitable for presentation in a peer-reviewed journal and/or in conventional thesis chapters as in the standard PhD thesis

VII. A summary/conclusion drawing together the various outcomes of the work into a coherent synthesis and indicating directions for future work

VIII. References and appendices as in the standard PhD thesis

25. The incorporation of publication-style chapters in the thesis may lead to some duplication since each publication-style chapter may have self-contained components that might overlap with parts of the other sections of the thesis. Nevertheless, the maximum length of the alternative format doctoral thesis should not normally exceed that of the standard thesis.

26. As with the standard doctoral thesis, examiners should satisfy themselves that the alternative format thesis meets the requirements of the doctoral degree as prescribed in the appropriate regulations and policies. The fact that a thesis contains material that has been published or accepted for publication does not guarantee that the examiners will recommend the award for which the candidate is being examined.

27. The publication of research papers in journals may incur financial costs; for example for journal page charges, payment costs for publishing in “Open-Access” journals or colour reproduction costs. The student must be made aware of these potential financial costs by the supervisory team at the time when the decision is made to produce an Alternative Format thesis.

Reviewed: June 2023

Regulations for the Award of the Degree of PhD (by Published Works)

Approved for entry from September 2023

The PhD by Published Works is a doctoral qualification based on research that has already been undertaken and published. These materials will be accompanied by a critical analysis making the case that the scope, coherence, significance and contribution to knowledge of the published works is equivalent to a PhD based on a research project conducted at the university.

The criteria for the award of the Degree of PhD (by Published Works) shall be the same as those established for the Degree of PhD.

‘Published Works’ may be defined as works which are in the public domain or which have at least been accepted for publication (provided that the candidate can provide adequate proof that this is the case). Works submitted for examination should not have been published more than ten years previous to the date of registration.

In line with research degree schemes which fall within the University's subject area of Creative and Performing Arts, the published works may take one or more of the following forms: artefacts, score, text, portfolio of original works, performance or exhibition. The submission shall be accompanied by any other items which may be required (e.g. a catalogue or audio or visual recording).

On completion of a Doctoral degree, graduates will have attained Level D, as defined by the QAA's Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Eligibility of Candidates

1. Except as provided in Regulations 3 and 4 below, any candidate for the Degree of PhD (by Published Works) shall be a member of academic staff at Aberystwyth University, of at least three years' standing prior to registration for the degree. The purpose of these regulations is to enable academic staff with a record of publication to obtain a doctoral award.

2. A candidate for the degree must be enrolled as a part-time candidate at the University prior to examination for the Degree. The time limit for submission of the works and critical analysis for examination is 12 months from the date of registration.

3. A person shall not be eligible to proceed to the Degree of PhD (by Published Works) under these regulations if they have been previously approved for a PhD or other related Doctoral Degree of the University.

4. A candidate who has been examined for a Doctoral Degree but who has not been approved for such a degree may not become a candidate for the Degree of PhD under these Regulations.

Application

5. A prospective candidate for the Degree of PhD (by Published Works) shall identify the most appropriate Department of the University for registration and shall submit an application to the PG Admissions Office stating the subject with which their contribution to scholarship appears to be most nearly connected and specifying the published work or works on which their claim to the degree is based. In assessing the application, the Department shall draw upon staff with relevant subject expertise, including the candidate's prospective advisor, to consider the works submitted in order to decide whether or not there is a prima facie case to support the referral of the works for examination, prior to admission. In approaching this decision, departments must be convinced, inter alia, that the material presented can be assessed (e.g. that there is a full video record for performance artworks) and that, in the case of materials jointly authored, the precise contribution of the candidate can be determined. Such issues must be considered in full prior to admission and any applications that raise concerns around viability of materials on such grounds must be referred to the Head of the Doctoral Academy for a final decision on admission.

6. A candidate, in submitting an application, shall be required to

(a) declare that the submission as a whole is not substantially the same as any that they have previously made or is currently making, whether in published or unpublished form, for a degree, diploma, or similar qualification at any university or similar institution,

(b) state what parts (if any) of the work or works submitted have previously been submitted for another qualification,

(c) declare that, until the outcome of the current application to the University is known, the work or works submitted will not be submitted for any such qualification at another university of similar institution,

(d) submit electronic copies, or else three hard copies of each of the published works in question, and a list of the works submitted.

Candidature

7. Candidates shall be required to provide a written critical analysis which shall:

- set the publications within the context of the literature and field in which they have worked.
- provide a critical analysis establishing the original contribution to learning in that field which in their opinion their work has made.
- establish that the material submitted form a coherent body of work equivalent in scope and level to a PhD in their field.
- describe and provide evidence of the impact of their work, which may include citations and may refer to the quality of peer reviewed journals or other outlets in which the publications have featured.
- establish the currency of the publications within the relevant literature.
- where the submitted materials are creative works, candidates will need to demonstrate that these works were undertaken with research questions in mind, or else that the creative process considered retrospectively served to explore research questions in the way that a creative practice-based PhD would have done, to provide the appropriate academic grounding.

Word Lengths

8. The critical analysis will normally be between 5,000 – 10,000 words. However, where the published works are creative works that were not explicitly written as part of an

investigation of defined research questions within a particular academic literature, up to 25,000 words will be permitted and may be required to present the case that the research outputs are equivalent to a practice-based PhD.

9. While the volume of published materials will vary in length according to the discipline area, the total submission including critical analysis should not normally be longer than the PhD limit of 100,000 words excluding appendices and references. A justification should be provided for longer submissions.

10. Candidates may submit work(s) done in collaboration with others in support of the candidature, but such work shall be accompanied by a statement signed by each collaborator indicating the nature and amount of the work done by the candidate.

11. The University shall assign an advisor or advisors nominated by the candidate's Department. The advisor should hold a PhD and have experience of supervising research students to successful completion. The advisor(s) shall provide general guidance on the presentation of the published works for examination and advice on the critical analysis.

Examination

12. An examination board shall be established in accordance with the regulations on the submission and examination of research degrees, with a Chair, and two external examiners. A candidate's advisor may be invited by the Chair of the Examining Board to attend the oral examination in an advisory capacity, subject to the candidate's approval.

13. Examining Boards may recommend one of the following options:

(a) That the candidate be approved for the degree of PhD, subject to such minor corrections to the critical analysis as may be required by the Examining Board. Corrections should be completed within a period of four working weeks.

(b) That the candidate be not approved for the degree of PhD but that, where the critical analysis submitted for examination is satisfactory in substance but defective in presentation or in detail, the candidate be allowed to modify it and re-submit it on one further occasion, not later than one year from the date of the official communication to him/her of the result, for the degree of PhD on payment of a re-examination fee. This

option is not available when a re-submitted work is being examined. Upon resubmission, a second viva will be held but this requirement may be waived at the discretion of the Examining Board where it has reached the view that the thesis clearly meets the standard to pass without amendments, or with only very minor corrections or amendments. In other, exceptional circumstances, a viva for a resubmission may be waived with the approval of the Examining Board and the Head of the Doctoral Academy. The Chair shall advise the candidate of the arrangements which have been made for the oral examination.

(c) That the candidate be not approved for the degree of PhD.

14. Once approved by the examiners, the critical analysis and any relevant associated works or links to them, shall be uploaded to the University's research repository.

Reviewed: May 2025

Regulations for Doctoral Degrees by Examination and Thesis or Portfolio [DProf]

These regulations govern the award of Doctoral Degrees by Examination and Thesis (Professional Doctorate – generically DProf – or a specifically named award) at Aberystwyth University. Professional and Practice-based Doctorates will be awarded in recognition of the successful completion of an approved taught programme of study, together with successful completion of further study and research.

Research projects in professional doctorates are normally located within the candidate's profession or practice. In practice-based or practitioner doctorates the candidate's output involves practice-related materials. For example, in the performing arts, the output involves a written component, which complements the practice-based element (this may be shorter than the traditional PhD thesis, and includes both reflection and context), and one or more other artefacts, such as a novel (for creative writing), a portfolio of work (for art and design), or one or more performance pieces (for theatre studies, dance or music).

Professional doctorates are rooted in an academic discipline as well as in a profession (education, engineering, law and so on). Candidates whose research arises out of practice alone, who are not working in an academically related professional field and who spend most of their time learning in their work environment rather than with the higher education provider would be more likely to complete a practice-based doctorate. In both practice-based and professional doctorate settings, the candidate's research may result directly in organisational or policy-related change.

The regulations are intended to enable qualified professionals to engage in high level Continuing Professional Development (CPD) and to study at Master's and up to doctoral level while remaining in employment and closely associated with their profession/workplace.

Such degrees will be awarded to students who have demonstrated:

the creation and interpretation of new knowledge, through original research or other advanced scholarship, of a quality to satisfy peer review, extend the forefront of the discipline, and merit publication or production;

a systematic acquisition and understanding of a substantial body of knowledge which is

at the forefront of an academic discipline or area of professional practice or is likely to lead to professional or organisational change in the candidate's workplace/profession; the general ability to conceptualise, design and implement a project for the generation of new knowledge, applications or understanding at the forefront of the discipline, and to adjust the project design in the light of unforeseen problems; a detailed understanding of applicable techniques for research and advanced academic enquiry.

Typically, holders of the qualification will be able to:

make informed judgements on complex issues in specialist fields, often in the absence of complete data, and be able to communicate their ideas and conclusions clearly and effectively to specialist and non-specialist audiences; demonstrate self-direction and originality in tackling and solving problems, and act autonomously in planning and implementing tasks at a professional or equivalent level; continue to undertake pure and/or applied research and development at an advanced level, contributing substantially to development of new knowledge, techniques, ideas or approaches.

Doctoral degree holders will have completed research training that provides the qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment, viz:

the exercise of initiative and personal responsibility; decision-making in complex and unpredictable situations in professional or equivalent environments; the independent learning ability required for continuing professional development.

In judging the merit of work submitted in candidature for Doctoral Degrees by Examination and Thesis or Portfolio (**DProf**), the examiners shall bear in mind the standard and scope of work which it is reasonable to expect a capable and diligent student to present after the period of registered study.

Professional and practice-based doctorates are assessed through submission of a thesis or portfolio, and an individual oral examination ('viva' or 'viva voce')

In the assessment of professional and/or practice-based doctorates, examiners' criteria may include the extent to which the candidate understands current techniques in the subject, for example through demonstrating engagement with and use of research methods and how they inform professional practice.

In the case of professional doctorates, successful completion of the degree normally leads to professional and/or organisational change that is often direct rather than achieved through the implementation of subsequent research findings.

On completion of a Doctoral degree, graduates will have attained Level 8, as defined by the QAA's Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications of UK Degree-Awarding Bodies October 2014.

Regulations:

1. A candidate for a Doctoral Degree by Examination and Thesis, may study for the degree by pursuing the programme of study and research on a full-time or part-time. Candidates must be in relevant employment or engaged in relevant professional practice.
2. Candidates may qualify following successful completion of an approved taught course and programme of research pursued either on a full-time basis or on a part-time basis.
3. A candidate for a Doctoral Degree by Examination and Thesis must hold one of the following qualifications prior to commencement of the course:
 - an initial degree from Aberystwyth University;
 - an initial degree from another University approved for this purpose;
 - a non-graduate qualification which the University has deemed to be equivalent to graduation.

Irrespective of a candidate's qualifications, the University must satisfy itself that a candidate is of the required academic standard to complete the scheme of taught courses and research proposed.

4. A candidate must register at the University, pay the appropriate fee prescribed and pursue the scheme of teaching and research for the minimum period defined below:

Full-time candidates: minimum period three years;

Part-time candidates: minimum period five years.

Where a candidate joins the scheme having already met the requirements of Part One, in whole or in part, through completion of a Master's award, the time limits will be reduced according to the completed credits and previous period of registration so that the candidate would, in total, register and pay fees for the minimum periods above.

5. Candidates will be required to present themselves for examination in two parts.

6. In Part One a candidate shall follow a taught programme of study (which may include periods of approved professional/industrial practice and training), together with a programme of research for the duration prescribed. Typically this will comprise 60 taught credits and a portfolio of work or research thesis (approximately 20 000 words in length) equivalent to a further 120 credits. The taught credits must include an element of research training. Exemptions may be granted by the University (based on previous postgraduate or professionally accredited qualifications) from specified components of Part One of the scheme.

7. Part One examinations shall comprise assessments of an advanced character in fields of study prescribed by the Programme Regulations. These examinations shall include evaluation of the professional practice and training and may take the form of unseen written examination papers or set projects or other forms of course assessment. In order to progress to Part Two students must pass at least 160 credits and obtain an overall rounded weighted average mark of 50%

8. A candidate who has successfully completed Part One but does not wish to continue or is unsuccessful in their candidature for the DProf, will be eligible for the award of an MProf, MRes or other Master's award forming Part One of their programme of study.

9. A candidate who fails to pass Part One may, at the discretion of the Examining Board for the taught components, re-present themselves for examination on one further

occasion only, not more than fifteen months from the date of the original examination. A fee shall be payable for re-examination.

10. Part Two of the examination shall take the form of a thesis or portfolio of work, embodying the methods and results of a research project or projects, examples of which are given in Appendix One below

11. At Part Two the thesis shall be examined via oral examination. A portfolio of work shall be examined in the manner laid out in the specific Programme Regulations.

12. Both the taught and research components of the examination must be passed in order to qualify for the award of the degree.

13. A candidature shall lapse if a thesis is not submitted, in the form and manner prescribed, by the time-limit listed below:

Full-time

In the case of a three-year candidature, four years from the official beginning of the candidate's period of study.

Part-time

In the case of a five-year candidature, seven years from the official beginning of the candidate's period of study.

NB For students admitted from September 2018, the following maximum Time Limits for Completion, including any periods of temporary withdrawal and extensions approved by the Head of the Doctoral Academy, apply:

From initial registration date to the first submission of the thesis for examination:

Full-time DProf: six years

Part-time DProf: nine years

Extensions to these limits may be granted by the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research) provided that:

1. Evidence of special circumstances is supplied
2. The Student's department confirms that the research project remains current and

viable and that the student is capable of completing the project within the requested extension.

14. The University shall ensure that candidates are supervised, on a regular and continuing basis, in accordance with its general procedures for postgraduate supervision.

15. For each candidature, the University shall approve a supervisory team including a minimum of one main supervisor and a second supervisor nominated by the candidate's Department.

16. The main supervisor will normally be a full-time member of the academic staff of the University. The second supervisor will normally be a full-time member academic staff of the University or collaborative institution or organization.

17. Every candidate's research shall be completed by the presentation of a thesis (normally not exceeding 60,000 words in length, excluding Appendices and genuine footnotes) which embodies the methods and results of the research or a portfolio of work. A properly constituted Examining Board is required to conduct an oral examination of a candidate who submits either a thesis or portfolio for examination. This requirement might, however, be waived at the discretion of the Examining Board, when an examination of re-submitted work is being conducted, and the examiners judge the work to be a clear pass

18. Candidates shall sign a declaration to certify that the work submitted has not been accepted in substance for any degree or award, and is not being submitted concurrently in candidature for any degree or other award. The signed declaration shall be included in all copies of the works submitted for examination.

19. The University shall ensure that the form of submission and examination of the thesis or portfolio conforms to the University's 'Regulations for the Submission and Examination of Research Theses'.

Additional Regulations pertaining to named programmes

DAG (Doctor of Agriculture)

Part One shall comprise a total credit value of 180 credits. The research Examination shall consist of a thesis of up to 60,000 words (excluding Appendices and genuine footnotes).

Regulations for the National Degree of Doctor of Education (EdD) Wales

[https://www.aber.ac.uk/en/media/departmental/academicregistry/admissions/academicqualityhandbook/partb-rulesregs/rulesandregs/Regulations-for-the-National-Degree-of-Doctor-of-Education-\(EdD\)-Wales.pdf](https://www.aber.ac.uk/en/media/departmental/academicregistry/admissions/academicqualityhandbook/partb-rulesregs/rulesandregs/Regulations-for-the-National-Degree-of-Doctor-of-Education-(EdD)-Wales.pdf)

Regulations for the Submission and Examination of Research Theses

- [Time Limits and Extensions](#)

1. The expectation is that candidates will submit their thesis within the time-limit laid down by regulation. A candidature may be suspended or a time-limit extended by the University, but in exceptional cases only.

2. Normally, suspensions/extensions will be granted only on compassionate grounds, or in cases of illness, serious domestic difficulties, inordinate professional commitments or unforeseen research difficulties which can be demonstrated to have adversely affected the candidate. A full and reasoned case, supported by appropriate medical or other independent evidence, must be made for consideration by the University. In the case of candidates who cite exceptional professional commitments, the request must be accompanied by written confirmation and description by the employer of the exceptional workload borne by the candidate.

3. A clear statement must be supplied, showing that the department concerned has evaluated the situation in which the candidate finds themselves and that it considers the requested extension to be appropriate. This should include a schedule of work leading to submission within the extended time limit proposed. The candidate should also provide a written statement.

4. Applications for suspensions/extensions must be routed via the candidate's supervisor and Faculty to the Doctoral Academy.

- [Submission and Language of Thesis](#)

5. No later than three months before submission is expected, the candidate shall complete an Intention to Submit form which will initiate procedures for examination including nomination by the Department/Faculty of an external examiner(s). External examiners are expected to be appointed prior to submission. This will ensure that the examination process can begin promptly upon submission.

6. For the purpose of the examination, candidates shall submit an electronic copy of the thesis which shall contain:

- i. an abstract not exceeding three hundred words in length;
- ii. statement, signed by the candidate, showing to what extent the work submitted is the result of the candidate's own investigation; acknowledgement of other sources shall be made by footnotes giving explicit references. A full bibliography must be appended to the work;
- iii. a declaration, signed by the candidate, to certify that the work has not already been accepted in substance for any degree, and is not being concurrently submitted in candidature for any degree;
- iv. a signed statement regarding availability of the thesis, indicating that the thesis, if successful, may be made available for deposit in the university's electronic research repository and for inter-library loan or photocopying (subject to the law of copyright), either immediately or after the expiry of any bar or embargo; and that the title and summary may be made available to outside organisations. Where creative works are part of the submission, the critical commentary only will normally be published. The title and summary of the thesis shall be freely available.

7. A candidate is at liberty to publish the whole or part of the work produced during the candidate's period of registration at the University prior to its submission as a whole, or part of a thesis. Such published work may later be incorporated in the thesis submitted to the University.

8. Any candidate who is following a scheme of study or research of the University may choose to submit a thesis or other work in either Welsh or English. A candidate who wishes to be assessed in a language (i.e. either Welsh or English) which is not the main language of tuition/assessment for the scheme concerned is required to notify the Centre for Welsh Language Services by the time-limit laid down by the University. The nominated officer should then liaise with the Chair of the Examining Board regarding:

- i. such arrangements as may be required (e.g. provision of simultaneous translation facilities) for the viva voce examination;
- ii. the necessary arrangements, which must be approved - at the request of the Chair of the Examining Board - by the examiner(s), for the translation and/or marking of work;
- iii. the engagement of a suitable person or persons to act as advisory examiners or - at an approved fee - as translators.

9. On occasion it may be considered appropriate for a thesis to be submitted in a language other than Welsh or English for scholastic reasons. In such cases, permission to make such a submission may be given by the Head of the Doctoral Academy where a reasoned case has been made for approval, normally in advance of the candidate's registration for study. Appropriate arrangements for the supervision and examination of the thesis must be outlined by the department to confirm that the quality of the student's learning experience and the standards of the award will not be compromised. Approval shall not be given to requests based upon the candidate's lack of ability to produce a work for submission in either Welsh or English.

10. Candidates who are resubmitting a thesis which has failed previously to satisfy the Examiners are required to re-submit their modified thesis together with those documents specified in paragraph 6 above.

11. Detailed instructions on the presentation of theses are to be found in Notes of Guidance issued to candidates who are about to submit their thesis.

12. If satisfied that a *prima facie* case exists for referring the thesis for detailed examination, the Doctoral Academy will make the thesis available to both examiners. The thesis should not be sent by the department or candidate directly to the examiners. This applies equally to a re-submission.

13. A candidate may not amend, add to, or delete from the thesis after it has been submitted.

- [Constitution of Examining Board](#)

14. All Examining Boards shall consist of:

- i. a Chair;
- ii. an external examiner;
- iii. either an internal examiner or a second external examiner.

15. In the case of staff candidates, there shall be two external examiners and no internal examiner. This regulation shall apply both to candidates who were members of staff during their registration period, and those who become staff members after completion of a student registration but prior to submission. This is to ensure that the examiners

are, and will be perceived to be, objective and to avoid any difficulties which might be experienced by the candidate or examiner when they are work colleagues. Where candidates have become staff after a student registration, and where the nature or location of their employment is such that a proposed internal examiner would be demonstrably objective, the case may be made to the Head of the Doctoral Academy that the examination should be conducted by one internal and one external examiner.

16. Examining Boards for candidates who are, or who become at the time of submission, members of staff at another institution or University shall be constituted as for student candidatures (i.e. normally with one external and one internal examiner).

17. Heads of Department may nominate a senior member of their academic staff to act as Chair of an Examining Board. Where the Head of Department/Faculty is also the supervisor of the candidate concerned, they must delegate this task. The Chair of the Board shall be independent in the examining process, and shall be responsible for the conduct of the examination. The Chair shall be:

- normally a Senior Lecturer or above or otherwise suitably experienced for the role;
- normally from the student's department(s) but may be drawn from another department where no-one suitable can be identified, for example, because of conflicts of interest or the need for a Welsh speaker;
- experienced in supervising and examining PhD candidates;
- familiar with the regulations governing research degree vivas.

All chairs must have attended the Doctoral Academy workshop on chairing vivas.

18. The external examiner(s) shall be appointed in accordance with the provisions of the University's Academic Quality Handbook. They must be aware of the nature and purpose of the degree for which the candidate is being examined and must possess specialist knowledge and expertise in the subject of research. Other criteria for appointment are set out in the Handbook.

19. External examiners should not be appointed where they have had extensive contact with the candidate. Where they have had significant contact, details of the nature of the contact should be made known to the Doctoral Academy for consideration during the

appointment process. Further information is contained in the notes of guidance for examining boards and Intention to Submit form.

20. The internal examiner should normally:

- be a member of staff from the student's department(s) but may be drawn from a cognate department where appropriate or required;
- hold a PhD;
- have experience of supervision of at least one research student.

A member of staff who has acted as an external examiner for a research degree at another university will be eligible for the role of internal examiner.

21. If, in exceptional circumstances, it proves impossible to appoint an appropriate internal examiner from within the University, the Doctoral Academy may approve the appointment of a second external examiner in lieu of an internal examiner, nominated by the department. All steps should have been taken to appoint an internal examiner before a second external examine is considered.

22. A candidate's supervisor shall not be appointed internal examiner, although they may be invited by the Chair of the Examining Board, with the prior consent of the candidate, to attend the oral examination in an advisory capacity.

23. The Chair of the Examining Board may invite other appropriate persons to attend the oral examination in an advisory capacity.

24. The examiners should be provided with the candidate's thesis and any associated materials and the guidance necessary for the conduct of the examination. The Chair, and the examiners, will be asked to note that the University expects that, normally, the examination of the candidate should be completed within a period of twelve working weeks from the date of despatch of the thesis to the examiners.

- [Unacceptable Academic Practice](#)

25. One purpose of the oral examination is to determine that the thesis is the candidate's own work. Where it is suspected that unacceptable academic practice may have occurred in a submitted thesis, it should be referred to the Academic Registry. If

this occurs prior to the oral examination, that examination may be postponed until the allegation of unacceptable academic practice is resolved. If, during the oral examination, the Examining Board suspects unacceptable academic practice, the result may be withheld pending an investigation. Suspected unacceptable academic practice after a result has been issued or after the degree has been awarded should also be referred to the Academic Registry. Results and awards may be rescinded if unacceptable academic practice is found to have occurred.

- [Conduct of Examination](#)

26. The Examining Board is required to conduct an oral examination of candidates in all cases except where an examination of a re-submitted thesis is being conducted. Under this circumstance, this requirement may be waived at the discretion of the Examining Board where it has reached the view that the thesis clearly meets the standard to pass without amendments, or with only very minor corrections or amendments. In other, exceptional circumstances, a viva for a resubmission may be waived with the approval of the Examining Board and the Head of the Doctoral Academy. The Chair shall advise the candidate of the arrangements which have been made for the oral examination.

27. The following individuals must be present at the oral examination:

- i. The Chair;
- ii. The External Examiner(s);
- iii. The Internal Examiner where one is required.

28. The oral examination must normally be held in the University. However, the Head of the Doctoral Academy may, in exceptional circumstances, permit an oral examination to be held elsewhere. Such a practice, should not, however, be more costly than holding an oral at the University itself.

29. With the approval of the Head of the Doctoral Academy, an oral examination may be held by electronic means. Detailed guidance on protocols for the conduct of the examination will be available from the Academic Registry.

30. Students may bring to the attention of the Examining Board any circumstances that could affect their performance in the viva or affected production of the thesis. These

should be noted these on the Intention to Submit Form where possible. The Doctoral Academy will then consult with Student Support and the Chair of the Board as appropriate to put adjustments in place and brief examiners.

31. A supervisor attending an oral examination may speak only when invited to do so by the Chair.

32. A candidate's supervisor(s) shall have the right to convey to the Chair of the Examining Board any concerns relevant to a candidate's research project, the resulting thesis or its examination which the supervisor(s) consider(s) the Board should take into account prior to reaching its decision. The supervisor(s) shall convey these concerns, in writing, both to the Chair and to the candidate as soon as practicable after the presentation of the thesis and in any event, early enough to allow the candidate sufficient time prior to the examination of the thesis (including any oral examination) to consider the points made and prepare a response.

33. It shall be the responsibility of the Chair of the Examining Board to ensure that the candidate is satisfied with the time allowed for consideration of and response to the points made by the supervisor(s), and to secure for the record a written statement by the candidate to this effect.

34. An Examining Board shall consider any written submission to the Chair by a candidate's supervisor(s) and any response by the candidate in accordance with the provisions immediately above.

35. There shall be no recording of the viva.

36. After completion of the examination, the Chair will ensure that the interim report form and the result and report form is completed and a copy given to the student. The Chair must ensure that the Report and Result form and the interim report form are completed and that the Doctoral Academy is informed of the outcome. The Report and Result form will contain the external examiner's report (including a report on the oral examination), the internal examiner's report, a joint examiners' report and the Examining Board's formal recommendation of result. The formal recommendation of result must record the exact decision of the Examining Board and must be signed by the

Chair, the external examiner(s) and the internal examiner(s), but not by any person attending in an advisory capacity.

37. In the event that the thesis must be re-examined or that corrections must be made, the Chair is responsible for arranging for the collation and provision of the feedback to the candidate and the supervisor at the time of the viva, or shortly thereafter.

38. On receipt of the completed Report and Result form, and, where appropriate, confirmation that all required corrections are complete, the Academic Registry will inform the candidate of the final result.

39. All copies of a failed thesis must be returned to the candidate once the process of examination (and the hearing of any subsequent appeal case) has been completed.

- [Recommendation for award](#)

42. Examining Boards may recommend one of the following options:

- [In the case of candidates for the Degree of PhD](#)

a. that the candidate be approved for the degree of PhD subject to completion of such minor corrections as may be required by the Examining Board. Corrections should be completed within a period of four working weeks from the date of the official notification to the candidate of the outcome of the examination. The Board may stipulate that the corrections shall be scrutinised by either/both examiner(s) prior to the award process being initiated.

b. that the candidate be approved for the degree of PhD subject to such corrections and amendments as may be required by the Examining Board. Corrections and amendments shall be completed within a period of up to six months from the date of the official notification to the candidate of the outcome of the examination. The Board may stipulate that the corrections shall be scrutinised by either/both examiner(s) prior to the award process being initiated.

c. * that the candidate be not approved for the degree of PhD but be allowed to modify the thesis and re-submit it for the degree of PhD on one further occasion, upon payment

of a re-submission fee. A candidate may be allowed a single opportunity to re-submit the work. The re-submission should take place within a period not exceeding twelve months. The submission and examination process shall be the same as for the first submission.

d. that the candidate be not approved for the degree of PhD, but be approved instead for the degree of MPhil subject to completion of such minor corrections as may be required by the Examining Board. Corrections shall be completed within a period of four working weeks from the date of the official notification to the candidate of the outcome of the examination. The Board may stipulate that the corrections shall be scrutinised by either/both examiner(s) prior to the award process being initiated.

e. * that the candidate be not approved for the degree of PhD, but be allowed to modify the thesis and re-submit it for the degree of MPhil on payment of the examination fee. A candidate may be allowed a single opportunity to re-submit the work. The re-submission shall take place within a period not exceeding one year from the date of the official notification to the candidate of the outcome of the examination.

f. that the candidate be not approved for the award of a degree.

* These options are not available in the case of candidates who have re-submitted a thesis for examination.

- [In the case of candidates for the degree of MPhil](#)

a. that the candidate be approved for the degree sought subject to completion of such minor corrections as may be required by the Examining Board. Corrections should be completed within a period of four working weeks from the date of official notification to the candidate of the outcome of the examination. The Examining Board may stipulate that the corrections made shall be scrutinised by either/both examiners(s) prior to the award process being initiated.

b. that the candidate be approved for the degree sought subject to such corrections and amendments as may be required by the Examining Board. Corrections/amendments shall be completed within a period of twelve working weeks from the date of the official notification to the candidate of the outcome of the examination.

c. * that the candidate be not approved for the degree sought but be allowed to modify the thesis and re-submit it on payment of a re-submission fee. A candidate may be allowed a single opportunity to re-submit the work. The re-submission shall take place within a period not exceeding one year from the date of the official notification to the candidate of the outcome of the examination.

d. that the candidate be not approved for the degree of MPhil.

* These options are not available in the case of candidates who have re-submitted a thesis for examination.

- [Arbitrating Examiner](#)

43. When a dispute arises between the external examiner and internal examiner(s) or the two external examiners, the usual Report and Result Form should be marked by the Examiners and Chair so as to indicate that the Board had been unable to agree upon a recommendation. In such a case the Head of the Doctoral Academy shall resort to another external examiner who shall be asked to arbitrate. When selecting an Arbitrating External Examiner, the Head of the Doctoral Academy shall take into account any written reports submitted by the members of the Examining Board and may also take into account – but need not be bound by – any nomination made by the original Board.

44. Upon appointment, an Arbitrating External Examiner shall be given a copy of the candidate's work together with the reports of the original examiners and the 'Report and Result Form' and 'Notes for Arbitrating External Examiners'. When considering the candidate's work, an Arbitrating External Examiner may choose whether or not to refer to the reports of the original examiners (and if so, when they might do so). They may also choose to conduct a further oral examination and, if so, whether or not the original examiners may be invited to attend.

45. When the Arbitrating External Examiner has concluded the consideration of the work, the outcome should be communicated to the Chair of the Examining Board, in the first instance. The Chair shall arrange for the 'Report and Result Form' to be completed, signed and returned to the Academic Registry.

- [Appeal Procedure](#)

46. Candidates who are not recommended by the Examining Board for the award of the degree in respect of which they submitted their thesis may appeal against the decision reached. They will be notified of the appeal procedure by the Academic Registry.

- [Access to Theses](#)

47. Two copies of every work approved by the examiners shall become the property of the University. The Chair must arrange for the deposit of one hard copy of a successful thesis in the National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth, and for the deposit of a second copy in the University Library. In addition to the permanent bound volumes deposited in libraries, candidates must provide an electronic copy of the final version of the thesis for deposit in the University's Research Repository. Theses and theses metadata so deposited will be made available by the University to external repositories including the digital collection of the National Library of Wales and the British Library's UK database of theses.

48. The candidate will be expected to sign a declaration that the electronic copy as deposited in the electronic repository is identical in content to that deposited in the Library, and that the candidate has obtained the appropriate copyright permissions for the inclusion of any third party content within the thesis so that the work can legally be made available in an open access repository. Material accepted for the repository should conform to guidelines issued from time to time by Information Services.

49. A hard copy thesis submitted for a higher degree of the University shall normally be openly available and subject to no security or restriction of access. However, candidates may request either a bar on photocopying and/or access to the thesis for a specified period of up to five years, or that it is not made available in the University's Research Repository. Any recommendation for a bar on access must be made to the University via the Research Degrees Committee or its Chair, by the Faculty after consideration of an application by a candidate's supervisor, supported by the Director of Postgraduate Studies. It shall be the responsibility of the supervisor to make the application as soon as is reasonably practicable. Ideally this should be at the time of registration of the candidate's scheme of research. The recommendation must include

a statement of the grounds on which the request is being made. Most requests of this nature are made on the grounds of the commercial sensitivity of the research, which may have been partially sponsored by a commercial or industrial organisation.

50. Following a successful examination, the Chair of the Examining Board must notify the University Librarian, the National Library and the Research Repository that the work is to be withheld from access for a specified period. The period approved shall be calculated from the date on which the candidate is formally notified by the University that they have qualified for a degree. When a thesis is subject to a bar on access, it will not be deposited in the University Research Repository or any other open access electronic repository until the expiry of that bar.

51. The Faculty may approve a request by the student that the thesis should not be made available in the University Research Repository. This should be clearly stated in the declarations accompanying the thesis. This does not constitute a bar on access to the thesis.

- [Admission to Degree](#)

52. Candidates who have qualified for higher degrees may be admitted to their degrees once the examination has been completed and the Examining Board's recommendation for the award of the degree - on the Report and Result form - has been received by the Academic Registry, along with confirmation that all necessary corrections have been completed to the satisfaction of the examiners.

Updated: July 2025

Guidelines for the Conduct of Viva Voce Examinations by Electronic Means (Online Vivas)

General Principles

1. Following discussion with staff and students, the University has taken the view that the best way of conducting the viva voce examination required for all research degrees is face to face, with all parties present together in Aberystwyth. This ensures the integrity of the examination and provides the most conducive atmosphere for students to defend their work. The viva is not a formality and can have a major impact on the outcome of the assessment.
2. Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, electronic vivas were only allowed in exceptional circumstances, subject to certain conditions and with the approval of the Head of the Graduate School and written consent of all parties. During the Covid-19 pandemic, in light of the difficulty of planning and holding vivas requiring travel to Aberystwyth and appropriate health and safety measures for face-to-face activities, and the importance of timely examination, online vivas became the default option.
3. The experience of online vivas has been largely positive. Staff and students have become more comfortable with the technology and there are benefits to using it, in reduced financial and environmental costs and greater scope to hold vivas in a timely fashion and with the most appropriate external examiner. While Research Degrees Committee still believes that face-to-face vivas provide the best experience, it is more relaxed about permitting online vivas where the participants are content. The approval of the Head of the Graduate School is still required and a case should be made for an online viva, but circumstances do not have to be exceptional.
4. An online viva may be requested where all participants would prefer one and have no concerns about its conduct and where:
 - I. Cost, travel or other issues make an electronic viva preferable, particularly where it would be difficult to proceed with a face-to-face viva or where there would be an unacceptable delay.

II. Agreed arrangements for a face-to-face viva had to be terminated due to unexpected circumstances such as severe weather or illness of one of the participants. The normal action would be to postpone the viva but if the student would be disadvantaged significantly by this, the use of electronic means may be preferable.

III. A joint or dual award is being offered and staff from the partner university are joining the assessment.

Technology

5. Microsoft Teams is the main supported technology within the University and would normally be used for an electronic viva. Where it is not possible to use Teams, for instance where students are based in countries where Teams cannot be accessed, other technologies such as Zoom could be used but cannot be supported in the same way by Information Services. Where sensitive data or subjects are being discussed, security is an important consideration. Reliability is crucial to ensure that the viva proceeds smoothly. Information Services may be consulted to ensure that a particular technology is acceptable.

Running the Viva

6. The viva will be arranged and scheduled by Faculty Academic Registry staff of Aberystwyth University. Calendar appointments will be sent to participants with the link to join the meeting. The Learning and Teaching Enhancement Unit can provide support.

7. Every effort must be made to ensure that the viva runs smoothly and without interruption, as closely as possible to a face-to-face meeting. The following practical points should be taken in to account in arranging an electronic viva:

I. It is AU policy not to record vivas and all participants should be clearly informed of this. Any recording facility should either be disabled or, since this cannot be done in Teams without restricting the ability to share screens, the Chair should ensure that recording is not turned on (it will be clearly visible if recording is turned on).

II. All participants should identify suitable venues and facilities where they can have a good quality connection throughout the viva, can be comfortable and will not be interrupted. If this is not possible at their home or office they should consider the use of appropriate facilities at another university, British Council offices or other recognised venues. Such venues will often have experienced, English or Welsh-speaking technical support staff available in secure facilities. Information Services can advise on the available options. Students can use AU facilities. Where students request that they participate remotely in a viva which could have been held in Aberystwyth, they must bear any associated costs such as room hire.

III. Picture and audio quality must be of sufficient quality to enable dialogue and to be sure of the identity of the student if s/he is the remote party. If the candidate is not personally known to the staff present at the examination then a member of staff should be invited to check their identity.

IV. If the candidate is at a remote site and not accompanied by a member of the examination board or supervisor, s/he should be reminded that they should be alone and, as far as possible, the visual view of the candidate should confirm this.

V. While last minute problems with arrangements may lead to a request to use electronic media, best practice is to test the proposed system well in advance – ideally at least a week in advance – so that any difficulties can be addressed and all parties can be as familiar as possible with the technology.

VI. Vivas vary considerably in length and the candidate will not participate in some parts. This must be borne in mind when booking a session so that a continuous link will be maintained for as long as required but can be suspended if required. The candidate must not be able to hear private discussions between the examiners. Separate calendar invitations can be used to ensure the student is not present at private panel discussions.

VII. Technical support covering the range of possible problems should be available as far as possible, in person at the venue or via an established telephone link. This needs to take account of the different time zones that may be involved and the possible length

of the viva. If given sufficient notice, IS may be able to have staff available at the start of vivas or to check the set-up in advance.

VIII. If interruptions to power supplies or electronic links are likely, consideration should be given to whether to hold the viva by electronic means. In any event, there should be a contingency plan made known to all parties in advance should the link fail or deteriorate in quality, to enable the viva to be completed as soon as possible. All parties should have access to a telephone able to make calls to the other party and have contact telephone numbers easily available. The Examining Board should be able to remain in contact with the student while the situation is resolved and to ensure that they remain on site.

IX. The possibility must be kept in mind that a candidate could intentionally break the link and a contingency plan should exist for this. If it is established that this has occurred and the viva cannot be completed as a result, the student shall not be given a further opportunity to attend a viva and shall fail.

X. Chairs of vivas should be sensitive to the fact the viva can be a stressful event and the outcome can be disappointing to students. It would be sensible for candidates to have someone available locally to support them if they are at a remote venue.

Revised October 2021