

Research Degrees: Guidance notes series

# # 7. SUBMISSION AND EXAMINATION

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### 'Writing Up' fee status

1. A student can be considered to be at the writing up stage when:
  - The minimum registration period has been completed;
  - Most research and writing has already been accomplished; and
  - The work being carried out is mainly editing and refining.
2. In accordance with the University fees policy a student is permitted to transfer onto the writing up fee status in October only.
3. A student is permitted to be on the writing up fee status for a maximum of three months as a full-time student and six months as a part-time student.
4. If a student exceeds the maximum period on the writing-up fee status and has not submitted their thesis, they will be transferred back onto full fees. The student will be eligible for a refund of the full fee on a pro rata basis once they have submitted their thesis.
5. Writing up fee status counts as part of the overall period of registration and ends on the date of submission of the thesis.
6. A student must register during the period of writing up and pay the specific fee applicable during this period. This entitles the student to:
  - a. Continued access to library facilities
  - b. Continued access to IT
  - c. Continued access to the University Doctoral Research Centre
  - d. Supervisory support in reviewing the final draft submission of the thesis and arrangement of a mock viva
7. Any additional support will be at the discretion of the Directors of School and Chair of the Research Degrees Committee.
8. A student may transfer to 'writing up' fee status with the approval of the Directors of School and Chair of the Research Degrees Committee provided that he or she has:
  - a. completed the minimum registration period and not exceeded the maximum registration period
  - b. completed the transfer process from MPhil to PhD where transfer is a requirement of his/her research studies programme.
  - c. completed all experimental work or collection of material related to his/her thesis and
  - d. a full draft of the entire dissertation or be sufficiently advanced, in the judgement of the Director of Studies, to be in a position to submit the thesis within three months.
9. The student's Director of Studies must complete the transfer to writing up fee status form (RD3WU) indicating that the student fulfils the criteria for transfer and stating that in their judgment the student is in a position to submit the thesis within the maximum period permitted on the writing up fee status.
10. This form must also be signed by the Director of School and Chair of Research Degrees Committee and submitted to Graduate Studies no later than the last working day of September.

### Completion

11. The supervisors and student should, at an early stage, agree a timetable for completion in order to allow sufficient time for the following:
  - a. Comments and feedback from the supervisors on the thesis;
  - b. Agreement of thesis title;
  - c. Length of the thesis;
  - d. Nomination of examiners; and
  - e. Submission of temporarily bound thesis to Academic Services.

12. During the completion period, the candidate should also agree the timelines for input from the wider supervision team, including opportunities for feedback on the draft. This will further support thus the student in producing a considered thesis.
13. The thesis must be the candidate's own work. The responsibility for writing, preparing and submitting it within the permitted registration period rests with the candidate.
14. Candidates are responsible for writing the thesis in their own words, except for quotations from published and unpublished sources which must be clearly identified and acknowledged.
15. All successful theses are kept in the University library. In preparing the final version of the thesis, candidates might find it useful to look at other theses to guide them in achieving the required standard. It is important to avoid errors in typing and spelling.
16. Exceptionally, a student who has passed the MPhil/PhD transfer stage and is within their maximum period of PhD registration may request in writing - at the time of submitting their PhD thesis - that the thesis be considered for an MPhil.

### Submission of the thesis

17. The student must ensure that the thesis is submitted to Graduate Studies before the expiry of their registration period.
18. The submission of the thesis for examination is at the sole discretion of the student, subject to satisfying any conditions of eligibility required by the Research Degrees Committee.
19. While a student would be unwise to submit the thesis for examination against the advice of their supervisors, it is his/her right to do so. Equally, students should not assume that a supervisor's agreement to the submission of a thesis guarantees the award of the degree.
20. Prior to submission to Graduate Studies, the candidate must submit their thesis electronically via Turnitin. The Director of Studies will need to confirm and check the electronic submission and the Turnitin report.
21. Two temporarily bound copies of the thesis must be submitted to Graduate Studies before the expiry of their registration period. Where the student is also in permanent employment with the University, he/she will need to submit three copies. For clarification on the number of copies required, guidance should be sought from Graduate Studies in good time.
22. The candidate will also need to submit a completed and signed Candidate's Declaration (**RD7DEC**) to the effect that the thesis is the candidate's own work. The Director of Studies will need to countersign the declaration and confirm that no issues arise from the submission through Turnitin.
23. The student must also confirm, through the submission of the **RD7DEC** declaration form, that the thesis has not been submitted for a comparable academic award. The student should not be precluded from incorporating in a thesis covering a wider field, work which has already been submitted for a degree or comparable award, or which has already been published, provided this is acknowledged on the declaration form and also in the thesis. Where published work has been jointly authored, it should be clearly indicated which part(s) of the work(s) are the student's responsibility.
24. The student must ensure that the thesis format is in accordance with the requirements of the University's regulations. Theses should be submitted for examination in a temporarily bound form which is sufficiently secure to ensure that pages cannot be added or removed. A thesis submitted in a temporarily bound form should be in its final form in all respects save the binding. Following successful examination the final thesis must be presented in a permanent electronic format before the degree may be awarded. In such cases, the student must confirm that the contents of the electronic thesis are identical with the version submitted for examination, except where amendments have been made to meet the requirements of the examiners.

### Creative work

25. A student may undertake a programme of research in which the student's own creative work forms, as a point of origin or reference, a significant part of the intellectual enquiry. Such creative work may be in any field (for instance, fine art, design, engineering and technology, architecture, creative writing, musical composition, film, dance and performance) but must have been undertaken as part of the enrolled research programme. In such cases, the presentation and submission may be in part be in an alternative form.

26. The creative work must be clearly presented in relation to the argument of a written thesis and set in its relevant theoretical, historical, critical or design context. The thesis itself should conform to the usual scholarly requirements and be of an appropriate length.
27. The final submission should be accompanied by some permanent record (for instance, video, photographic record, musical score, and diagrammatic representation) of the creative work and, where practicable, bound with the thesis.
28. The final submission should include a copy of the edited text(s) or collection of artefact(s), appropriate textual and explanatory annotations, and a substantial introduction and critical commentary which set the text in the relevant historical, theoretical or critical context. The thesis itself must conform to the usual scholarly requirements and be of an appropriate length, as specified below.
29. Where a student, collaborative establishment or the University wishes the thesis to remain confidential for a period of time after completion of the work, application for approval should have normally been made to the Hub Scrutiny Panel at the time of admission. In cases where the need for confidentiality emerges at a subsequent stage, a special application for the thesis to remain confidential after submission should be made immediately to the Hub Scrutiny Panel. The period approved will normally not exceed two years from the date of the oral examination.

### Format of the thesis

30. Except with the specific permission of the Research Degrees Committee the thesis must be presented in English.
31. There must be an abstract of approximately 300 words bound into the thesis which should provide a synopsis of the thesis stating the nature and scope of the work undertaken and of the contribution made to the knowledge of the subject treated.
32. Three loose copies of the abstract must be submitted with the thesis. The loose copies of the abstract should have the name of the author, the degree for which the thesis is being submitted, and the title of the thesis as a heading.
33. The thesis should include a copyright statement, immediately following the title page, in the following form:
  - a. 'This work is the intellectual property of [the author]. You may copy up to 5% of this work for private study, or personal, non-commercial research. Any re-use of the information contained within this document should be fully referenced, quoting the author, title, university, degree level and pagination. Queries or requests for any other use, or if a more substantial copy is required, should be directed in the owner(s) of the Intellectual Property Rights'.
  - b. *Note: If there are other owners of the IP, as a consequence of any statement issues under section XXX, they must also be named here.*
34. The thesis must include a statement of the candidate's objectives and must acknowledge published or other sources of material consulted (including an appropriate bibliography) and any assistance received.
35. When a candidate's research programme is part of a collaborative group project, the thesis must indicate clearly the candidate's individual contribution and the extent of the collaboration.
36. The candidate is free to publish material in advance of the thesis but reference must be made in the thesis to any such work. Copies of published material should either be bound in with the thesis or placed in an adequately secured pocket at the end of the thesis.
37. As a general guide, the text of the thesis should not normally exceed the following length:
  - PhD 80,000 words
  - MPhil 40,000 words
38. Where the submission includes material in other than textual form, the written thesis should normally be within the range:
  - PhD 30,000–40,000 words
  - MPhil 15,000–20,000 words

39. The recommended length of the texts is indicative and examiners will have regard to the candidate's fulfilment of the University's assessment criteria.
40. The title of the thesis should not exceed twenty (20) words in length.
41. Conferment of the award is conditional on receipt by Graduate Studies of all of the following, which will be communicated to the student by Graduate Studies at the time:
- A PDF version of the thesis for deposit in the University's library's Institutional repository;
  - A completed and signed British Library registration form, permitting full participation in the UK thesis service; and
  - A signed draft certificate, including the wording of the thesis title, agreed by the candidate and the Chair of the Research Degrees Committee.
42. Following the award of the degree, the library on behalf of Graduate Studies must:
- send a copy of the title page, abstract and a list of contents to the British Library in accordance with the arrangements for participation in the UK thesis service; and
  - Lodge the PDF version of the thesis in the electronic institutional repository.
43. Where the Faculty Scrutiny Panel has agreed that the confidential nature of the candidate's work is such as to preclude the thesis being made freely available in the library of the University (and collaborating establishment, if any) and, in the case of a PhD, the British Library, the thesis will, immediately on completion of the programme of work, be retained by the University on restricted access and for a time not exceeding the approved period, only be made available to those who were directly involved in the project.
44. The following requirements must be adhered to in the format of the submitted thesis.
- Theses must normally be in A4 format; the Research Degrees Committee may give permission for a thesis to be submitted in another format where it is satisfied that the contents of the thesis can be better expressed in that format; a candidate using a format larger than A4 should note that the production of microfiche copies and full size enlargements may not be feasible.
  - Copies of the thesis must be presented in a permanent and legible form either in typescript or print. The size of character used in the main text, including displayed matter and notes, shall not be less than 2.0mm for capitals and 1.5mm for x-height (that is, the height of lower-case x).
  - The margin at the left-hand binding edge of the page must be no less than 40mm; other margins must not be less than 15mm.
  - Double or one-and-a-half spacing must be used in the typescript except for indented quotations or footnotes where single spacing may be used.
  - Pages must be numbered consecutively through the main text including photographs and/or diagrams included as whole pages.
  - The title page must give the following information:
    - a) the full title of the thesis
    - b) the full name of the author
    - c) that the degree is awarded by Nottingham Trent University
    - d) the award for which the degree is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of both Nottingham Trent University and Southampton Solent University
    - e) the Collaborating Establishment(s) if any, and
    - f) the month and year of submission.

45. Guidance note: A specimen title page is provided below.

<p style="text-align: center;">The origins of the Farmers' Co-operative in Wessex</p> <p style="text-align: center;">John Smith</p> <p style="text-align: center;">A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the Nottingham Trent University and Southampton Solent University for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy</p> <p style="text-align: center;">If appropriate: This research programme was carried out in collaboration with the Borchester Farmer's Club</p> <p style="text-align: center;">October 2013</p>
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#### Approval of examiners

46. A student will be examined by at least two and normally not more than three examiners; at least one will be an external examiner and one an internal examiner.
47. Internal examiners should have experience in the general area of the student's work. External examiners should have experience in the specialist area of the student's thesis and demonstrate a consistent and extensive record of relevant publication.
48. The examining team as a whole should have substantial experience of successful supervision and examination of research degree students. Normally, the members of the examining team should have collectively completed a minimum of three examinations.

#### Internal examiner

49. An internal examiner will be a member of staff of the University who is not a member of the student's supervisory team.
50. An internal examiner should not previously have acted as an independent assessor - either for progress review or transfer of registration - in respect of the candidate being examined.

#### External examiner

51. An external examiner must be independent both of the University and Nottingham Trent University, must not have acted previously as the student's supervisor or adviser, and must have no other conflict of interest involving the research student.
52. An external examiner must normally not be either a supervisor of another student or an external examiner on a taught programme at the University. Former members of staff of the University must not normally be approved as external examiners until three years after the termination of their employment with the University.
53. A nomination for an external examiner who has been in a formal collaboration, or who has authored a research paper, with a member of the supervision team within the three years prior to the examination would not normally be regarded as independent.

### Submission of the examination team for approval

54. The proposed arrangements for the student's examination should be submitted approximately six months before the expected date of submission.
55. The Director of Studies should submit to Graduate Studies proposals for the student's examiners for the Research Degree Committee approval on the **RD6E form**. The student's examination may not take place until the arrangements have been approved. In special circumstances, the Research Degree Committee may act directly to appoint examiners and arrange the examination of a student.
56. The Research Degrees Committee should ensure that the same external examiner is not approved so frequently that his/her familiarity with the University might prejudice objective judgement.
57. Where the student and the internal examiner are both permanent staff of Southampton Solent University, a second external examiner should be appointed. A student who is on a fixed short-term employment contract (for instance, a research assistant) is exempt from the requirements of this regulation.
58. A research degree student cannot act as an examiner.
59. The appropriate School will be responsible for paying the fees and expenses of the examiners. The responsible School will be that which employs or has most recently employed the student's Director of Studies.

### Examination arrangements

60. The examination for the MPhil and PhD will have two stages: firstly preliminary assessment of the thesis and secondly its defence by oral or approved alternative examination.
61. Graduate Studies will make known to the student the procedure to be followed for the submission of the thesis (including the number of copies to be submitted for examination) and any conditions to be satisfied before the student may be considered eligible for examination.
62. Graduate Studies will arrange for the student, all supervisors and the examiners to be notified of the date of the oral examination.
63. Graduate Studies will send a copy of the thesis to each examiner, together with the examiner's preliminary report form (**RD8**) and the University's policies, and should ensure that the examiners are properly briefed as to their duties.
64. Each examiner must read and examine the thesis and submit on the appropriate form (**RD8**) an independent preliminary report on it to Graduate Studies before any oral or alternative form of examination is held.
65. In completing the preliminary report, each examiner should consider whether the thesis provisionally satisfies the requirements of the degree and where possible make an appropriate provisional recommendation subject to the outcome of the oral examination.
66. The preliminary report forms (**RD8**) are to be completed independently and without formal or informal consultation between examiners, whether external or internal.
67. The examiners will have completed and returned their preliminary report (**RD8**) to Graduate Studies, normally at least five working days before the viva.
68. Graduate Studies must ensure that the preliminary reports (**RD8**) have been circulated to the other examiners before the oral examination takes place.
69. An examiner having received the thesis and wishing to contact another examiner, the student or any member of supervisory team should do so only through Graduate Studies.
70. Once a thesis has been submitted, members of supervisory teams may not directly contact the examiners. Contact for any other reason should be made only through Graduate Studies.
71. The student will take no part in the arrangement of the oral examination and must have no contact relating to the examination with the internal or external examiner(s) between the appointment of the examiner and the oral examination. A student contacting an examiner between the appointment of the examiner and before the oral examination is considered an offence, and as such will be treated as academic misconduct.

### Conduct of the oral examination

72. Where evidence of cheating or plagiarism in the preparation of the thesis or other irregularities in the conduct of the examination come to light subsequent to the recommendation of the examiners, the Research Degrees Committee will consider the matter, if necessary in consultation with the examiners, and take appropriate action.
73. The Research Degrees Committee must ensure that all examinations are conducted and the recommendations of the examiners are presented wholly in accordance with the University's policies. In any instance where the Research Degrees Committee is made aware of a failure to comply with all the procedures of the examination process, it may declare the examination null and void and appoint new examiners.
74. A student will normally be examined orally on the programme of work and on the field of study in which the programme lies. Where for reasons of sickness, disability or comparable valid cause the Research Degrees Committee is satisfied that a student would be under serious disadvantage if required to undergo an oral examination, an alternative form of examination may be approved. Such approval must not be given because the student's knowledge of the language in which the thesis is presented is inadequate.
75. The oral examination will be conducted by the external and internal examiners and will be chaired by an independent, senior, experienced staff member of the University appointed by the Research Degrees Committee.
76. The supervisory team should make itself available to the student's examiners. A supervisor may, with the express written permission of the student, attend the oral examination. They may not contribute to the discussion.

### The role of the independent chair

77. The role of the chair is to ensure that the examination is conducted with due regard to fair play and in compliance with the relevant regulations. The chair also acts as a source of experience and guidance to the examiners about the conduct of the examination and ensures that the reports are completed and, where appropriate, feedback is provided to the student. The chair will also monitor the completion of reports relating to minor or major revisions and will liaise with the examiner(s) about the action to be taken in response to any resubmission required of the student.

### Viva examination

78. The oral examination will normally be held in the UK. In special cases, the Research Degrees Committee may give approval for the examination to take place abroad.
79. Recording of the viva examination will not normally be permitted.
80. Examiners may indicate informally their recommendation on the result of the examination to the candidate but they must make it clear that the decision rest with Nottingham Trent University, to which all decisions are reported.
81. Where requested by the candidate, examiners' reports should be released to the candidate at the conclusion of the examination process.

### Examination outcomes

82. Following the oral examination the independent chair should, where the examiners agree, submit, on the appropriate form (RD9REX), a joint report and recommendation outcome by the examiners to Graduate Studies. The preliminary reports, as submitted by the examiners prior to the viva, and joint recommendation of the examiners should together provide sufficiently detailed comments on the scope and quality of the work to enable the Research Degrees Committee to satisfy itself that the recommendation chosen is correct.
83. In cases where the examiners do not agree, separate forms, reports and recommendations, should be submitted.
84. Following the completion of the examination the examiners may recommend that:
  - a. the candidate be awarded the degree;
  - b. the candidate be awarded the degree subject to minor amendments being made to the thesis to the satisfaction of the examiner(s);
  - c. the candidate be awarded the degree subject to substantive amendments being made to the thesis to the satisfaction of the examiner(s);

- d. the candidate be permitted to re-submit for the degree and be re-examined, with or without an oral examination;
  - e. the candidate be not awarded the degree and be not permitted to be re-examined; or
  - f. in the case of a PhD examination, the candidate be awarded the degree of MPhil subject to the presentation of the thesis amended to the satisfaction of the examiners.
85. Where the agreed recommendation of the examiners is (b), (c), (d), or (f), they must in addition complete a Form of Guidance (**RD10G**) which Graduate Studies will forward to the candidate and the supervisory team.
86. Examiners may indicate informally their recommendation on the result of the examination to the candidate but they should make it clear that the decision rests with the Nottingham Trent University Research Degrees Committee, under the powers delegated by Academic Board, to which all decisions are reported.

**Further information**

87. Further information relating to examination outcomes, explanation of results, Research Degrees Committee approval, posthumous award, and re-examination can be found in Policy 2R 'Examination of Research Awards'.