

3M.1.2 INSTRUCTIONS TO EXAMINERS FOR HIGHER DEGREES

(For candidates proceeding by thesis)

Note: Examiners are asked to send their reports and recommendations to the Registry Officer within two months from the date on which the Examiner receives a candidate's thesis. (See paragraph 6 below).

One External Examiner and one Internal Examiner are ordinarily appointed for each candidate in the first instance.

Periods of Study

1 Candidates for higher degrees by thesis are required to submit a thesis embodying the results of advanced study. The following are the minimum periods of prescribed study:

MA/MSc/LLM	1 year (2 years part-time)
MPhil	2 years (4 years part-time)
PhD	3 years (6 years part-time)

Assessment Criteria

2 In examining theses the following are the criteria, which Examiners are specifically asked to take into account.

All degrees

The examiners should satisfy themselves that the candidate's work shows evidence of adequate industry and application. The subject should be dealt with in a competent and scholarly manner. The thesis should be clear, well written, and orderly in arrangement.

In the case of work done jointly or under direction it is important that the extent of the candidate's own contribution shall be ascertained.

Doctor of Philosophy

This degree may be obtained in one of two ways: through a period of supervised research and the submission of a thesis, or through the submission of a portfolio of published work. The standard required for the award of the degree is the same in both cases. The thesis or other work submitted must demonstrate familiarity with, and an understanding of the subject, its principal sources and authorities. It should display critical discrimination and a sense of proportion in evaluating evidence and the opinions of others. It must also embody a significant and original contribution to the knowledge of the discipline either by the discovery of new knowledge, or by the exercise of a new and independent critical approach, for example through the discovery of new knowledge, the connection of previously unrelated facts, the development of new theory, or the revision of older views. A thesis should therefore contain matter worthy of publication, although it need not be submitted in a form which is suitable for immediate publication.

The candidate must show, by means of the thesis or in the oral examination, that he or she appreciates the relationship of his or her special work to a wider field of knowledge.

Master of Philosophy

This thesis must demonstrate familiarity with, and an understanding of the subject, its principal sources and authorities. It should display critical discrimination and a sense of proportion in evaluating evidence and the opinions of others. It must advance understanding in the field or area of study concerned, for example through a contribution to knowledge or by means of a commentary on existing knowledge. The thesis should therefore contain matter worthy of publication, although it need not be submitted in a form which is suitable for immediate publication.

The candidate must show, by means of the thesis or in the oral examination, that he or she appreciates the relationship of his or her special work to a wider field of knowledge.

Other degrees of Master (Master of Arts, Master of Science, and Master of Laws)

The grade descriptors for the Masters by Research are available in the Research Degrees Handbook, and if you are examining a thesis for one of these degrees a copy of the appropriate descriptors should have been enclosed. If they have been omitted, please be in touch with the Registry or with the Internal examiner.

Format of Thesis

3 The text of an MA, MSc, or LLM thesis should not normally exceed 40,000 words, an MPhil 80,000 words and a PhD 100,000 words. Permission to exceed these word limits may be given, but a thesis should not be failed on grounds of length alone. References to sources and authorities should be made in such a manner as to be readily identifiable. The thesis should also contain a list bibliography of books and other sources.

Oral Examination

4 An oral examination is mandatory for PhD and MPhil. An oral examination is normally a requirement for the MSc by Research; it is not normally a requirement for the MA by Research and the LLM by Research, but may be held at the discretion of the examiners. (See page 4 of the Report form.)

If exceptionally, two external examiners are required, a member of the academic staff will be present in a non-participating role.

Academic Misconduct

5. TurnItIn is a commercial service currently used by the University to check for originality and potential instances of plagiarism in student work. Postgraduate research students have the opportunity to submit their penultimate draft through Turnitin via their Supervisors. The Turnitin report will be used to help identify potential instances of plagiarism or concerns over originality and will contribute to the overall assurance of academic integrity prior to formal submission to examiners.

The submitted thesis for assessment has been scrutinised using TurnItIn and other means where applicable.

In approving this thesis to be submitted for the assessment process, the Supervisor and Research Officer have confirmed that they have no reason to believe there are concerns over originality or academic misconduct.

Where irregularities have been identified, an initial enquiry and/or full investigation has been held in accordance with the University's Academic Misconduct Policy and Procedure and there will have been three outcomes of this process:

- a. All material has been properly presented and no further action is taken.
- b. For minor irregularities in presentation of material (e.g. inconsistent referencing, inadequate/excessive paraphrasing, incorrect application of scholarly style), a judgement of Poor Academic Practice has been applied in accordance with 5.2 of the University's Academic Misconduct Policy and Procedures. The candidate is therefore required to take appropriate remedial action (in addition to any final recommendation of the examining team) before the award is confirmed and publication of the thesis occurs. This judgment has been included already in Part D of the examiner's report for the candidate, which is enclosed.
- c. A judgement of Academic Misconduct and an associated sanction has been applied. This will either have required the candidate to revise and resubmit the work for a capped mark, or receive a lesser award. This judgment has been included already in Part D of the examiner's report for the candidate, which is enclosed.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Should you have any concerns about the presentation or originality of the work when assessing the thesis, you should cease assessment and seek advice from the University's Central Academic Misconduct Officer, Miles Exelby, using the contact details in his enclosed letter.

The Examiners' Recommendation

- 6 Having considered all the evidence at their disposal, the Examiners shall:
- i) present a written statement of their opinion concerning the candidate's performance and the extent to which his/her work meets the assessment criteria;
 - ii) make a specific recommendation that the thesis be accepted (with or without amendments) or rejected; or
 - iii) make a specific recommendation that the candidate be awarded a lower degree;
 - iv) in the case of the Masters by Research, agree a numerical grade and a classification (Pass, Merit, Distinction) in line with the criteria given in the grade descriptors, and indicate this grade and this classification clearly in their report.

Where the recommendation is rejection, provided the candidate is submitting for the first time, the examiners may recommend that the candidate be permitted to submit the thesis in a revised form for the same degree or for a lower degree (if appropriate). In such a case the extent of the revision should be such that the candidate could reasonably be expected to complete it within two years.

Any further recommendation shall be accompanied by a full statement of reasons.

- 7 The report and recommendations of the examiners should be sent to the Registry not more than two months after the date of receipt. If an examiner is unable to send his report within this period, he should communicate with the registry as soon as possible.