

**Examination of Master of Science (MSc by Research) and
Master of Enterprise (MEnt) Degrees Policy**

February 2018

**Research Degrees and Researcher Development
Directorate of Research and Business Engagement**

CONTENTS

1.	Introduction	3
2.	The examination process	3
3.	Examining a Journal Format dissertation	
4.	External examiners' fees and expenses	4
5.	Dissertation submission	4
6.	The Examiners' Report Form (MSc by Research)	6
7.	Academic malpractice	6
8.	Communicating the recommendation to the candidate	7
9.	Candidate access to examiner report forms	7
10.	Examiner disagreement over a recommendation	7
11.	Recommendations for the degree – first examination	7
12.	Approval of recommendations	11
13.	The submission of the final dissertation and release of the result	11
14.	Graduation	12
15.	Appeals	12
16.	Appendix one: Faculty and central graduate office contact details	
17.	Appendix two: Documents relating to postgraduate research degree examination	
18.	Appendix three: The Oral Examination	

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The following policy relates to the examination of Master of Science by Research (MSc by Research) and Master of Enterprise (MEnt) degrees at the University of Manchester and applies to full-time and part-time students.
- 1.2 This policy is intended for use by examiners, academic and administrative staff, and students of the degree of Master of Science by Research (MSc by Research) and Master of Enterprise (MEnt).
- 1.3 Any deviation from this policy will only be considered in the most exceptional circumstances and must be agreed in writing with the candidate before the examination takes place. Enquiries should initially be directed to the appropriate graduate office in the school or the Manchester Enterprise Centre, and then to the Faculty graduate office and Faculty Associate Dean for Graduate Education, where appropriate. If necessary, cases may be referred to the Associate Vice-President for Graduate Education and/or the Manchester Doctoral College.

Enquiries to the Associate Vice-President for Graduate Education and/or the Manchester Doctoral College should be directed to the Graduate Education Team based in the Research and Business Development Office. Contact details for the Graduate Education Team, Manchester Enterprise Centre and Faculty graduate offices can be found at:

<http://www.staffnet.manchester.ac.uk/services/rbess/graduate/contacts/>

- 1.4 This document should be referred to along with the Master of Science by Research (MSc by Research) and [Degree of Master of Enterprise by Research \(MEnt\)](#) degree Ordinances and Regulations and other policies that comprise the Code of Practice for Postgraduate Research Degrees, of which this policy forms one section. See appendix two for a full list of University policy and guidance documents relating to the examination of Postgraduate research degrees. The University's code of Practice for Postgraduate Research degrees is available at <http://www.staffnet.manchester.ac.uk/services/rbess/graduate/code/>

2. The examination process

- 2.1 It is a requirement of the University that candidates for the degree of Master of Science by Research (MSc by Research) or Master of Enterprise (MEnt), who have progressed satisfactorily from the taught element of the degree, produce a dissertation or other appropriate form of submitted material which embodies their research for examination at the end of the degree. In what follows the term 'dissertation' includes other forms of submitted material except where stated.
- 2.2 The Master of Science by Research (MSc by Research) degree dissertation is normally examined by one internal and one external examiner. The Master of Enterprise (MEnt) degree dissertation is normally examined by two internal and one external examiner.
- 2.3 Although not normally required, the examiners may request the candidate to attend an oral examination prior to formulating their final report and recommendation on the dissertation. The terms *oral examination* and *viva voce* both refer to the method of

examining Master of Science by Research (MSc by Research) and Master of Enterprise (MEnt) degrees and are interchangeable. For the purposes of this policy, the term *oral examination* is used. The details of the oral examination can be found in appendix three.

2.4 Candidates must satisfactorily complete all requirements for all elements of the programme to the required standard to receive the final award.

3 Examining a Journal Format dissertation (Master of Science by Research (MSc by Research) only)

A Journal Format dissertation allows a Master of Science by Research (MSc by Research) candidate to incorporate sections that are in a format suitable for submission for publication in a peer-reviewed journal. Apart from the inclusion of such materials, the dissertation must conform to the same standards expected for a standard dissertation and examiners must be satisfied that the degree criteria have been met before recommending an award. Further details on Journal Format can be found in the University's *Presentation of Dissertations: Master of Science (MSc by Research) and Master of Enterprise (MEnt)*
<http://documents.manchester.ac.uk/display.aspx?DocID=7441>

4 External examiners' fees and expenses

- 4.1 Fee levels for external examiners are determined by the University from year to year and are specified in the examiners' appointment offer letter. Fees are normally paid on receipt of examiners' reports at the appropriate School or Faculty graduate office or Manchester Enterprise Centre.
- 4.2 Expenses may be claimed using the appropriate form available from the Faculty graduate office or Manchester Enterprise Centre, which should be completed and returned as soon as possible after the oral examination. Expenses must be claimed within two months of the expenditure being incurred.
- 4.3 Enquiries about examiner fees and expenses should be directed to the appropriate School or Faculty graduate office or Manchester Enterprise Centre in the first instance.

5. Dissertation submission

- 5.1 Candidates must complete the *Notice of Submission form* available electronically in the University's progression monitoring system, giving at least six weeks up to a maximum of six months notice of their intention to submit their dissertation is required to enable preparations for the examination to be made by the appropriate examiners. On submission of the completed *Notice of Submission form* the candidate's supervisor will ensure that examiners are nominated in accordance with the criteria stipulated in the University's *Nomination of Examiners & Independent Chairs for Postgraduate Research Degree Examinations Policy*
<http://documents.manchester.ac.uk/display.aspx?DocID=7444>

- 5.2 When the candidate feels that the dissertation is nearing a standard suitable for submission they should contact their supervisor to seek advice on when to give notice.. The supervisor's opinion is only advisory and the candidate may decide when to submit and if to follow the advice of the supervisor. Equally, the agreement of the supervisor to the submission of a dissertation does not guarantee the award of the degree.

Where the supervisor advises a candidate against submitting their dissertation, it is recommended that the supervisor notes their concerns with the Faculty/School Graduate Office or Manchester Enterprise Centre giving the reasons for advising against submission.

- 5.3 The dissertation must be presented in accordance with the instructions set out in the University's *Presentation of Dissertations: Master of Science (MSc by Research) and Master of Enterprise (MEnt)*
<http://documents.manchester.ac.uk/display.aspx?DocID=7441>
- 5.4 The dissertation must be submitted electronically in a single Portable Document Format (PDF) to the institutional repository via the eThesis submission system in My Manchester. In addition, candidates are required to submit two identical paper copies of the dissertation printed from the submitted electronic version. Both of these copies must be bound in accordance with the instructions set out in the University's *Presentation of Dissertations: Master of Science (MSc by Research) and Master of Enterprise (MEnt)*. The two bound copies of the dissertation must then be submitted to the appropriate School or Faculty graduate office or Manchester Enterprise Centre by the candidate's final submission deadline date.
- 5.5 The appropriate School or Faculty graduate office or Manchester Enterprise Centre will arrange for the dissertation to be forwarded to each examiner for assessment as soon as the dissertation is received from the candidate, along with the following documents;
- i. *Examiners' Report Form.*
 - ii. *Examination of Master of Science by Research (MSc by Research) Degrees Policy/ Master of Enterprise (MEnt)*
 - iii. *Fee and Expenses claim form (external examiners only).*

These documents will be accompanied by a covering letter containing instructions for completing and returning forms.

- 5.6 Under no circumstances should the student or supervisor supply the Examiners with a copy of the dissertation.
- 5.7 Examiners should not normally take longer than eight weeks (or four weeks for the *Master of Enterprise (MEnt)*) to read and assess the dissertation and write their dissertation examination reports.
- 5.8 If the dissertation has been poorly written or presented, examiners are not permitted to return the dissertation to the candidate for amendment after the dissertation has been formally submitted.
- 5.9 If an examiner is unable to carry out their duties an alternative examiner should be considered. The student should be informed of any change to the examiner or any delay in appointing a suitable examiner at the earliest possible time.

6 The Examiners' Report Form

- 6.1 Examiners must each complete the *Examiners' Report Form* after reading the dissertation and before discussing the dissertation with each other.
- 6.2 The examiners must agree upon a final joint recommendation on the outcome of the examination. It is essential that examiners refer to this policy when completing the report form.
- 6.3 Examiners' responses provided on the form must be typed. If this is not possible, responses must be written clearly and legibly. The report provides important feedback to the candidate on their dissertation and it is essential that responses are detailed, clear and legible.
- 6.4 Examiners must not annotate the dissertation with substantive comments. Only minor comments may be noted on the dissertation.
- 6.5 Forms should be made available to examiners electronically. All reports must be completed as fully as possible and signed by both/all examiners before they are returned to the appropriate School or Faculty graduate office or Manchester Enterprise Centre with the examiners' copies of the dissertation.
- 6.6 Examiners who are unable to agree on a recommendation must submit separate reports (see section 10).
- 6.7 The University issues two distinct versions of the report form for Master of Science by Research (MSc by Research) and Master of Enterprise (MEnt) examination, one for first submission and one for re-submission, and examiners must ensure that they are using the correct version.
- 6.8 The completed *Examiners' Report Form* must be returned to the appropriate School or Faculty graduate office or Manchester Enterprise Centre within eight weeks (four weeks for the Master of Enterprise (MEnt)) of the dissertation first being sent to the examiners.

6.8

7 Academic Malpractice

Examiners who suspect the candidate has committed academic malpractice should contact the appropriate School or Faculty graduate office in the first instance to seek advice (see appendix one for contact details). Guidance on dealing with academic malpractice can be found in the University guidelines: Academic Malpractice: Guidelines on the Handling of Cases:
<http://www.staffnet.manchester.ac.uk/policies/display/?id=117138&off=RegSec->SSS>

8. Communicating the recommendation to the candidate

- 8.1 When the examiners have made their decision, they may communicate it to the candidate, making it clear that their recommendation is provisional, until approved by the appropriate School/ Faculty or Manchester Enterprise Centre postgraduate research degrees panel. If they decide not to tell the candidate the outcome, and to avoid any possible misunderstanding, the candidate must, be given a clear indication of the procedure by which he/she will be notified of the outcome and the likely

timescale. Recommendations must be communicated through a formal process. Examiners should not feel under any obligation to communicate their provisional recommendation to the candidate or supervisor(s).

9. Candidate access to examiner report forms

- 9.1 Candidates can request to see all examiner reports once the recommendation has been approved by the appropriate School or Faculty or Manchester Enterprise Centre postgraduate research degrees panel.
- 9.2 To obtain copies of examiner reports, the candidate must submit a request in writing to the appropriate School or Faculty graduate office or Manchester Enterprise Centre after the recommendation has been formally approved.
- 9.3 Candidates must carry out all recommendations stated within the report.

10. Examiner disagreement over a recommendation

- 10.1 If, after their deliberations, examiners remain unable to reach an agreement on a recommendation, the procedure detailed below must be followed.
 - i. Each examiner must complete a separate *Examiners' Report Form (MSc by Research/ Master of Enterprise (MEnt))* giving justification for their recommendation. The forms should be submitted to the appropriate School or Faculty graduate office or Manchester Enterprise Centre.
 - ii. The internal examiner/s will be invited to the next meeting of the appropriate School or Faculty postgraduate research degrees panel or a meeting at the Manchester Enterprise Centre to discuss the reports and to see if a recommendation can be agreed. Before the meeting, the external examiner should be contacted in order to obtain his/her views on the case.
 - iii. If agreement is not reached, the appropriate School/Faculty or Manchester Enterprise Centre postgraduate research degrees panel may, at its discretion, appoint one or more new examiners or may determine other action where appropriate. Additional examiners must not be told the identity of the original examiners nor their specific recommendations.
- 10.2 Examiners may consult with staff in the appropriate School or Faculty graduate office or Manchester Enterprise Centre in the first instance for further advice if necessary (see appendix one for contact details). Graduate office/Manchester Enterprise Centre staff may refer any problems or concerns to the Faculty Associate Dean for Graduate Education.

11. Recommendations for the degree– first examination

There are three categories of recommendations for Master of Science by Research (MSc by Research): 'A' (award), 'B' (refer) and 'C' (reject). Within A category, there are two sub-categories. For both A sub-categories, examiners are also required to recommend a grade for the dissertation, as follows.

11.1 CATEGORY A: AWARD

- 11.1.1 Award with no corrections - recommendation A(i)

The examiners should select the recommendation A(i) if the dissertation is satisfactory in every way (listed below), there are no corrections to be made to it.

Recommendation A(ii) should be selected if some minor corrections are necessary to the dissertation, as detailed in section 12.1.2.

The examiners may recommend A(i) if they are satisfied that the dissertation is satisfactory in every way and that:

- the candidate possesses an appropriate knowledge of the particular field of learning within which the subject of the dissertation falls;
- the results of the research show evidence of the capacity of the candidate to pursue research and scholarship and represent original work;
- the dissertation is presented in a lucid and scholarly manner;
- the dissertation has been submitted in the form prescribed by University regulations and policy;
- no part of the dissertation has previously been submitted for the award of a degree at this or any other University;
- the dissertation and the work reported in it are the candidate's own.

11.1.2 Award subject to minor corrections - recommendation A(ii)

Recommendation A(ii) should be selected if the examiners are satisfied the dissertation meets the criteria for the degree but some minor corrections are necessary to the dissertation. The corrections, in the view of the examiners, and taking into account the guidance given below, should not be sufficiently serious to merit a recommendation for re-submission and re-examination under Category B.

Minor corrections permissible under A(ii) include:

- typographical errors; however, if the errors, although trivial individually, are so numerous as to suggest carelessness on the part of the candidate or so intrusive as to distract the reader's attention from the argument of the dissertation, the examiners would be fully justified in making a recommendation under Category B rather than A (ii);
- minor amendments and/or replacement of, or additions to, the text or to references or diagrams;
- other more extensive corrections may be made as long as they do not require significant (as defined by the examiners) re-working or re-interpretation of the intellectual content of the dissertation.

If more substantial corrections are required, the examiners should make Category B recommendation.

The required corrections must be provided by examiners on section 4 of the *Examiners' Report Form (MSc by Research)/ Master of Enterprise (MEnt)* for the benefit of the candidate. For recommendation A(ii), the corrections, once carried out by the candidate, must be approved by the internal examiner.

The time permitted for minor corrections (A(ii)) to be completed by the candidate is **normally no more than four weeks**, from the date the candidate receives the list of corrections from the appropriate School, or Faculty graduate office or Manchester Enterprise Centre. In exceptional

circumstances, where there are more than four weeks of work required of the student the candidate may be given 12 weeks to complete the revisions. The examiners' decision to allow 12 weeks for minor corrections to be completed, must be based on the quantity of the work required and length of time of which it is feasible to complete the corrections.

The graduate office or Manchester Enterprise Centre must receive notification, that the minor corrections have been approved by the internal examiner within 2 weeks of the candidate submitting the revisions.

The examiners' decision to recommend A(ii) should be made on the grounds that the dissertation will NOT require a further examination. The decision whether to recommend an A(ii) as opposed to B should not be determined by the candidate's personal circumstances and whether he/she will be able to correct the dissertation within the four-week timeframe.

The candidate is expected to be available in the period after the examination to complete minor corrections as part of their responsibilities in the examination of their degree. In very exceptional circumstances, the candidate may apply to the appropriate School or Faculty graduate office or Manchester Enterprise Centre for permission to submit the corrected dissertation later than within the four-week timeframe. Candidates and examiners should refer to the appropriate School/Faculty graduate office or Manchester Enterprise Centre if further guidance on minor corrections is required (see appendix one for contact details).

11.1.3 MSc by Research Degree Grades (Distinction, Merit, Pass).

For both recommendations A(i) and A(ii), the examiners are required to indicate whether the dissertation should be awarded the following grade:

- Distinction;
- Merit;
- Pass.

If the dissertation is of sufficient quality, both in presentation and research content, the examiners may recommend the award of Distinction or Merit.

For Distinction, the candidate is expected to demonstrate, through the dissertation, outstanding knowledge of the research topic, originality, high competence in the application of appropriate research methodology, and ability to critically evaluate the research context and outcome.

For Merit, the candidate is expected to demonstrate, through the dissertation, good knowledge of the research topic, competence in the application of appropriate research methodology, and ability to critically evaluate the research context and outcome.

The final degree award will be decided by the appropriate School/Faculty postgraduate or Manchester Enterprise Centre degrees panel, taking into consideration of both the examiners' recommendation and the performance of the candidate in the examinations of the taught component (as defined in the MSc by Research and Master of Enterprise (MEnt) degree regulations).

11.2 CATEGORY B: REFER FOR RE-EXAMINATION

Referral under recommendation B requires the candidate to resubmit the dissertation for re-examination. A candidate will be permitted to resubmit on only one occasion. See the University's *Resubmission and Re-examination of Postgraduate Research Degrees Policy* for details of resubmission and re-examination.

Examiners are required to make category B recommendations when the dissertation is unsatisfactory and requires a further examination.

For category B recommendations, examiners must submit a statement detailing the required corrections. Examiners should offer guidance to the student when their recommended changes will impact on the word limit of the dissertation; this may include suggestions on which parts of the dissertation can be reduced to allow for any additions.

The candidate is normally required to revise and resubmit the dissertation for the Masters degree **within four months** of receiving the examiners' statement detailing the required corrections from the appropriate School or Faculty graduate office or Manchester Enterprise Centre.

Any student who wishes to request an extension to their resubmission deadline, due to mitigating circumstances, should make the request via the normal extension application process within the School.

11.3 CATEGORY C: REJECT

Where examiners are not satisfied that the dissertation have met the standards required, and have not found evidence that the dissertation could be corrected under category A or B, they may recommend category C; reject.

For recommendation C, examiners must justify their decision not to recommend the MSc by Research/ Master of Enterprise in the *Examiners' Report Form (MSc by Research/ Master of Enterprise (MEnt))*. When the recommendation of the examiners is not to make an award, the internal examiner(s) will normally be invited to the next meeting of the appropriate School or Faculty postgraduate research degrees panel or Manchester Enterprise Centre examiners' meeting to assist in its consideration of the case and to answer any questions.

12. Approval of recommendations

- 12.1 The result recommended by examiners is provisional until approved by the appropriate School or Faculty postgraduate research degrees panel or Master of Enterprise examiners' meeting. The decision to award a Master of Science by Research (MSc by Research) or Master of Enterprise (MEnt) degree is made on the basis of the examiners' reports and recommendation, and the candidate's performance in the examinations of the taught component. A School or Faculty postgraduate research degrees panel or Manchester Enterprise Centre examiners' meeting will normally consist of a chair who is a senior academic member of staff, senior academic staff from each School/discipline within that particular School/Faculty and graduate office administrators.
- 12.2 A Master of Science by Research (MSc by Research) or Master of Enterprise (MEnt) degree recommendation will be approved either at a meeting of the appropriate School or Faculty postgraduate research degrees panel or the Manchester Enterprise

Centre examiners' meeting or just by the chair of the panel (i.e. 'chairs action'). If a recommendation is straightforward and there are no issues of concern, a recommendation will normally be approved by chair's action, and reported to members at the next appropriate School or Faculty postgraduate research degrees panel or Manchester Enterprise Centre examiners' meeting. The recommendation of category C (reject) will normally be considered at the next meeting of the appropriate School or Faculty postgraduate research degrees panel or Manchester Enterprise Centre examiners' meeting, where members will discuss individual cases and review examiners' reports. The internal examiner will normally be invited to attend this meeting and in some cases the supervisor(s) may be required to attend. It may also be appropriate to seek further comments, for clarity, from the external examiner.

13. Submission of the final dissertation and publication of the result

- 13.1 Once the examiners' report have been received and the recommendation has been approved either by chair's action or by the appropriate School or Faculty graduate postgraduate research degrees panel or Manchester Enterprise Centre's examiners' meeting, the appropriate School or Faculty graduate office or Manchester Enterprise Centre is able to release the approved recommendation to the candidate.
- 13.2 In the case of an A(ii) recommendation (award with minor corrections), the appropriate School or Faculty graduate office or Manchester Enterprise Centre must have received notification from the internal examiner that minor corrections have been satisfactorily completed by the candidate before the final award can be confirmed.
- 13.3 Results will not be formally published until the candidate has submitted an electronic copy of their final dissertation to the institutional repository via eThesis submission in MyManchester.
- 13.4 Any delay in the submission of the electronic copy of the final dissertation will delay formal publication of the result (i.e. completion of the candidate's record on the student record system), which will in turn delay the release of the degree certificate and graduation.

14. Graduation

- 14.1 Graduation ceremonies are organised by the Student Services Centre (SSC) and take place twice a year, in July and December. Degree certificates are issued at the graduation ceremony. Candidates who are unable to attend the graduation ceremony may request that the Student Services Centre post the certificate. The Student Services Centre will automatically post certificates to any candidates who do not attend the ceremony after the ceremony has taken place.
- 14.2 Candidates who do not receive their certificate or who have lost their certificate may request a replacement from the Student Services Centre.
- 14.3 A degree will not be conferred upon any person who has a relevant debt outstanding to the University. Candidates with debt outstanding to the University should contact the Student Services Centre in the first instance to arrange prompt payment.

15. Appeals

Appeals may be made on specific grounds as detailed in the University's policy on Academic Appeals, available at <http://documents.manchester.ac.uk/display.aspx?DocID=1872>

APPENDIX ONE: FACULTY & CENTRAL GRADUATE EDUCATION OFFICE CONTACT DETAILS

Graduate Education Office Faculty of Engineering and Physical Sciences

C4 Sackville Street Building
The University of Manchester
Sackville Street
Manchester M13 9PL
Tel: 0161 306 9191

Central Graduate Office Graduate Education Team

Research Office
The University of Manchester
3rd floor, Christie Building
Oxford Road
Manchester M13 9PL
Tel: 0161 275 8794

Manchester Enterprise Centre

Alliance Manchester Business School
Faculty of Humanities
5.16 Roscoe Building
Brunswick Street
Manchester M13 9PL
Tel: 0161 306 8487

APPENDIX TWO: DOCUMENTS RELATING TO POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH DEGREE EXAMINATION

FORMS

Notice of Submission Form
Nomination of Examiners Form
Examiners' Report Form

To be completed by:
Candidate & Supervisor
Supervisor
Both/all examiners

Forms are available from the Graduate Education Office

POLICY & GUIDANCE

- *Guidance for the Presentation of Dissertations: Master of Science (MSc) by Research and Master of Enterprise (MEnt)*
- *Academic Malpractice: Guidelines on the Handling of Cases*
- *Nomination of Examiners & Independent Chairs for Postgraduate Research Degree Examinations Policy*
- *Resubmission and Re-examination of Postgraduate Research Degrees Policy*
- *Conducting Oral Examinations by Video Link Policy*
- *Posthumous Award of Postgraduate Research Degrees Policy*

Policy/guidance is available from the Faculty Graduate Education Office or from the central graduate education web pages at

<http://www.staffnet.manchester.ac.uk/services/rbess/graduate/code/>

APPENDIX THREE: THE ORAL EXAMINATION

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The terms *oral examination* and *viva voce* both refer to the method of examining Master of Science by Research (MSc by Research) degrees and are interchangeable. For the purposes of this policy, the term *oral examination* is used.
- 1.2 The oral examination is not normally required for the MSc by Research degree. However, at first submission of a MSc by Research dissertation, examiners may require the candidate to attend an oral examination.

2 Purposes of the oral examination

- 2.1 The purposes of the oral examination are:
 - i. To enable the examiners to assure themselves that the dissertation and the research it reports are the candidate's own work. Where the dissertation is journal format there may be sections that are co-authored. The copyright statement at the beginning of the dissertation must make it clear which sections are collaborative or not the student's own work to enable the examiners to assure themselves that the dissertation and the research it reports are the candidate's own work.
 - ii. To give the candidate an opportunity to defend the dissertation, clarify any obscurities that the examiners have identified and discuss the subject of the dissertation in its disciplinary and/or interdisciplinary context. The copyright statement at the beginning of the dissertation must make it clear which sections are collaborative or not the student's own work to enable the examiners to assure themselves that the dissertation and the research it reports are the candidate's own work.
 - iii. To enable the candidate to demonstrate a firm understanding of the field of research and thus give the examiners an opportunity to assess the candidate's broader knowledge of the field or discipline within which the dissertation falls.

3 Disability Support

- 3.1 The University has responsibilities under the Disability Discrimination Act to make reasonable adjustments to its examination arrangements to ensure that candidates with additional support needs are not disadvantaged for reasons relating to a long-term medical condition, sensory impairment, specific learning difficulty and/or disability.
- 3.2 Candidates are required to inform the appropriate School of Faculty graduate office or Manchester Enterprise Centre if there are any particular arrangements or adjustments that need to be made to enable their full participation in the oral examination. This should be done no later than the notice of submission stage process. Further advice and support is available from the University's Disability Support Office at <http://www.dso.manchester.ac.uk/>

4 The examining panel

- 5.1 The examining panel for a Master of Science by Research (MSc by Research) or Master of Enterprise (MEnt) degree must comprise at least an internal examiner and an external examiner, except in the circumstances outlined in the University's

Nomination of Examiners & Independent Chairs for Postgraduate Research Degree Examinations Policy.

- 5.2 An independent chair may also be present under the circumstances detailed in *Nomination of Examiners & Independent Chairs for Postgraduate Research Degree Examinations Policy.*

5 Timeframe for organising and holding the oral examination

- 5.1 The oral examination must take place without undue delay, normally within eight weeks of the candidate submitting their dissertation to the Faculty graduate office or Manchester Enterprise Centre, and in no case beyond 12 weeks.
- 5.2 Candidates must be available to attend the oral examination from the time the dissertation is submitted. Candidates may only delay their oral examination in very exceptional circumstances and must apply to the Faculty graduate office or Manchester Enterprise Centre for permission.
- 5.3 The appropriate School/Faculty office or Manchester Enterprise is responsible for informing the candidate in writing of the date, time and location of the oral examination **not less than ten working days** before the examination.

6. Practical arrangements for the oral examination

- 6.1 The internal examiner is normally responsible for making the practical arrangements for the oral examination and for notifying the appropriate School or Faculty graduate office or Manchester Enterprise of the date, time and location of the oral examination so that the candidate and the external examiner can be informed of the arrangements no less than 10 working days in advance.
- 6.2 The internal examiner is expected to liaise with the external examiner to arrange the date and time of examination. If necessary, the internal examiner may be required to make practical arrangements for the external examiner's visit to Manchester. The internal examiner should normally be required to act as host during the external examiner's visit to the University.
- 6.3 In the absence of an internal examiner, an appropriate person (e.g. independent chair) must be nominated to make arrangements for the oral examination and to act as host to the external examiner.

7. Attendance of the supervisor, other academic staff and other students at the oral examination

- 7.1 Postgraduate oral examinations are open to members of University staff, including the candidate's supervisor(s), and other postgraduate research students of the University. The candidate, however, has the right to exclude particular individuals if they feel their presence will be detrimental to their performance in the examination.
- 7.2 Any individuals attending the examination other than the candidate, examiners and, where applicable, independent chair, should under no circumstances participate in the examination. If required by the examiners, the supervisor(s) may answer any questions put to him/her by the examiners, but at all other times the supervisor(s) must act as a silent observer.

- 7.3 The internal examiner or independent chair is responsible for ensuring that all attendees, other than the candidate, examiners and independent chair, give an undertaking in writing to maintain confidentiality in respect of the subject matter of the oral examination before the oral examination begins. Where the dissertation is subject to a confidentiality clause as of the Terms and Conditions of a funder then the external examiner must sign a non-disclosure agreement prior to the examination. This form is available from the appropriate Faculty/School Graduate Office.
- 7.4 Former supervisors of the candidate who are no longer employed at the University may only attend the oral examination with approval from the appropriate Faculty or School PGR Director.
- 7.5 The examiners and/or the independent chair have the right to exclude from the examination anyone they believe may jeopardise the smooth running or integrity of the oral examination.
- 7.6 The candidate and/or examining panel should give sufficient notice to the appropriate School of Faculty office or Manchester Enterprise Centre if it is expected that other individuals will attend the examination to allow any objections to be raised in sufficient time and to enable the graduate office to make arrangements such as the booking of a suitable venue.

8. The Pre-oral examination meeting

- 8.1 Prior to the oral examination, the examiners must arrange to confer with one another, in order to;
- i. exchange copies of their *Dissertation Examination Report Form* (if this has not already been done)
 - ii. identify issues to be raised in the oral examination;
 - iii. agree the broad strategy for the oral examination – who will ask which questions and in what order;
 - iv. confer with the supervisor, if required.
- 8.2 The internal examiner (or other nominated person in the absence of an internal examiner) is responsible for making the practical arrangements for the pre-oral examination meeting.
- 8.3 Sufficient time should be allocated for the meeting and the internal examiner or nominated person must arrange the attendance of the supervisor(s), if required.
- 8.4 If the examiners and, if applicable, the independent chair and supervisor(s) are unable to meet in person for the pre-oral examination meeting, the meeting may be conducted by telephone or by other appropriate means (eg, video link).

9. Conduct of the oral examination

The following rules governing the conduct of the oral examination must be adhered to:

- i. The oral examination must be conducted in English.
- ii. The candidate may only be examined upon material that is formally required for the degree for which he/she is being examined. Examiners may not take anything into account that is not a formal requirement of the degree.

- iii. Those present at the oral examination shall be the candidate and the examiners, and if required, an independent chair. If supervisors, academic staff or other postgraduate students attend, they must not participate in the examination.
- iv. An oral examination may not proceed without all the appointed examiners being present. In the event of an examiner's or the candidate's unexpected illness or other unforeseen event, the examination must be postponed to another date and the appropriate School of Faculty graduate office or Manchester Enterprise Centre informed.
- v. The supervisor(s) should inform the examiners of any exceptional circumstance, which in his/her view, might affect the candidate's performance adversely prior to the oral examination starting.
- vi. The oral examination must take place in a room occupied by The University of Manchester and must start at a time when buildings are officially open. In very exceptional circumstances, the oral examination may be held outside the University of Manchester with the permission of the Faculty Associate Dean for Graduate Education. In such cases, the examiners must ensure that the supervisor(s) can be contacted, if required, on the day of the oral examination. Any additional costs associated with holding the oral examination outside of the University must be met by the appropriate School or Faculty.
- vii. The oral examination must take place in a quiet, suitable room and without interruption.
- viii. Candidates may take a copy of their dissertation into the oral examination and may refer to it, if necessary. If required, the candidate may also take a reasonable number of supplementary notes, pen and paper, into the oral examination. The student may request to take a laptop, or tablet computer, into the oral examination but permission must be sought before the examination from the appropriate Faculty/School Graduate Office and the student must have reasonable academic justification for the request.
- ix. The candidate should be made to feel at ease and the form that the examination will take, as already agreed by the examiners, must be explained to him/her at the beginning of the examination.
- x. It is essential that no one indicates to the candidate, either before or during the oral examination, what is the likely outcome of the examination. The examiners and the independent chair (if in attendance) must ensure that any conflict of opinion that may arise during the examination will not lead to any indication of the likely outcome of the examination.
- xi. The examiners and the independent chair (if in attendance) are responsible for the conduct of the examination. It is their responsibility to see that the oral examination is fairly and properly conducted.
- xii. The examiners will each contribute to the examination process but the external examiner normally takes the lead role.

- xiii. Whilst some intensive questioning of the candidate may be needed, it must be non-aggressive.
- xiv. Reasonable allowances must be made with candidates with disabilities (see section 3).
- xv. The examiners may discuss ways of developing the candidate's research and writing beyond the requirements of a Master of Science by Research (MSc by Research) or Master of Enterprise (MEnt) degree, but the candidate must be informed explicitly that these discussions are not part of the assessment.
- xvi. The examiners may request to see evidence of the candidate's attendance at events related to their research, (e.g.; seminars, conferences and taught course units) where the regulations of the degree under examination require such components to be completed.
- xvii. The oral examination should run for as long as may be necessary for it to serve its proper purpose. The internal examiner or independent chair must give an opportunity for a break if the oral examination is anticipated to last more than two hours, provided that this does not disadvantage the candidate.
- xviii. If the supervisor(s) does not attend the oral examination, he/she must be available to provide any clarification requested by the examiners (before, during and after the examination).
- xix. The supervisor(s) and other present may be asked to withdraw from the examination room before the candidate, so as to provide the candidate with an opportunity to say anything to the examiners that he/she would prefer to say without the supervisor(s) and others being present.
- xx. The candidate will be asked to withdraw before the examiners begin their final deliberations. The independent chair may be present at the deliberations.

10. Communicating the recommendation to the candidate

- 10.1 When the examiners have made their decision, they may communicate it to the candidate, making it clear that their recommendation is provisional, until approved by the appropriate School or Faculty postgraduate research degrees panel or Manchester Enterprise Centre's examiners' meeting. If the examiners decide not to tell the candidate the outcome, and to avoid any possible misunderstanding, the candidate must, at the end of the oral examination, be given a clear indication of the procedure by which he/she will be notified of the outcome and the likely timescale. Examiners should not feel under any obligation to communicate their provisional recommendation to the candidate or supervisor(s) at this stage.

11. The joint Examiners Recommendation Form (MSc by Research) and Master of Enterprise (MEnt)

- 11.1 After the oral examination, the examiners must agree upon a final joint report to be typed on the *Examiners Recommendation Form (MSc by Research)* giving their recommendation on the outcome of the examination and their comments on the dissertation and candidate's performance at the oral examination.

- 11.2 Examiners' responses provided on the form must be typed. If this is not possible, responses must be written clearly and legibly. The report provides important feedback to the candidate on their dissertation and their performance at the oral examination and it is essential that responses are detailed, clear and legible.
- 11.3 Forms should be made available to examiners electronically. All reports must be completed as fully as possible and signed by both/all examiners and, where applicable, the independent chair before they are returned to the appropriate School or Faculty graduate office or Manchester Enterprise Centre with the examiners' copies of the dissertation.
- 11.4 In exceptional circumstances, examiners may submit separate reports with the permission of the appropriate School or Faculty graduate office or Manchester Enterprise Centre. Examiners who are unable to agree on a recommendation must submit separate reports.
- 11.5 The University issues two distinct versions of the report form for Master of Science by Research (MSc by Research) and Master of Enterprise (MEnt) examination,; one for first submission and one for re-submission, and examiners must ensure that they are using the correct version. The *Examiners' Report Form (MSc by Research)*/ Master of Enterprise (MEnt) is sent, together with the *Pre-Oral Examination* form and other documents, from the appropriate School or Faculty graduate office or Manchester Enterprise Centre when the dissertation is first sent to the examiners.
- 11.6 The completed *Examiners' Report Form (MSc by Research)*/ *Master of Enterprise (MEnt)* must be submitted to the appropriate School or Faculty graduate office or Manchester Enterprise Centre within **five working days** of the oral examination, regardless of which recommendation the examiners have made. If examiners require more than five working days to complete the form, they must inform the appropriate School or Faculty graduate office or Manchester Enterprise Centre within three working days after the oral examination.
- 11.7 Where an oral examination is not required (i.e.; where examiners agree to award the MSc by Research degree or Master of Enterprise (MEnt) degree and have therefore deemed that the oral examination is not required (see section 3.1) or for a resubmission where a further oral is not a requirement (see section 3.3)), the completed *Examiners' Report Form (MSc by Research)*/ *Master of Enterprise (MEnt)* must be returned to the appropriate School or Faculty graduate office within eight weeks (or four weeks for the Master of Enterprise (MEnt)) of the dissertation first being sent to the examiners.

12. Examiner disagreement over a recommendation

- 12.1 If, after their deliberations, examiners remain unable to reach an agreement on a recommendation following the oral examination, the procedure detailed below must be followed.
 - iv. At the end of the oral examination, the candidate should be informed that the examiners have been unable to reach a decision and that separate reports will be completed and considered by the appropriate School or Faculty postgraduate research degrees panel or Manchester Enterprise Centre examiners' meeting.
 - v. Each examiner must complete a separate *Examiners Recommendation Form (MSc by Research)*/ *Master of Enterprise (MEnt)*.

- 12.2 Examiners may consult with staff in the appropriate School or Faculty graduate office or Manchester Enterprise Centre in the first instance on the day of the oral examination for further advice if necessary (see appendix one for contact details). Graduate office staff may refer any problems or concerns to the Faculty Associate Dean for Graduate Education.

Document Control Box	
Policy / Procedure title:	Examination of Master of Science (MSc by Research) and Master of Enterprise (MEnt)Degrees Policy
Date approved:	February 2018
Approving body:	MDC
Version:	2
Supersedes:	June 2014
Previous review dates:	
Next review date:	February 2023
Related Statutes, Ordinances, General Regulations:	
Equality relevance outcome: High / Medium (delete as applicable)	
Related policies:	Examination of Doctoral Degrees Policy
Related procedures:	
Related guidance and or codes of practice:	Code of Practice for Postgraduate Research Degrees
Related information: (list or state N/A)	
Policy owner:	Graduate Education (Helen Baker)
Lead contact:	Graduate Education (Lorna Jones)