



## Resubmission and Re-examination of Postgraduate Research Degrees Policy

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### 1. Introduction and Purpose

- 1.1. This policy sets out the minimum requirements and expected standards for postgraduate research students (PGRs), examiners, and University of Manchester staff involved in the resubmission / re-examination of postgraduate research degrees.

### 2. Scope and definitions

- 2.1 This policy is a continuation of the main University of Manchester policies on postgraduate research degree examinations entitled [Examination of Doctoral Degrees Policy](#), [Examination of Master or Philosophy Degrees \(MPhil\) Policy](#) and [Examination of Master of Science \(MSc by Research\)](#) but specifically relates to resubmission and re-examination.
- 2.2 This policy applies to full-time and part-time PGRs of all postgraduate research degrees. The terms 'resubmission' and 'referral' used throughout this policy refer to a thesis / dissertation (or non-standard equivalent) that must be revised, resubmitted and re-examined after the first examination.
- 2.3 Any deviation from this procedure will only be considered in the most exceptional circumstances and prior approval / PGR agreement is required before the re-examination takes place.<sup>1</sup>
- 2.4 This document should be referred to along with the relevant degree [Ordinances and Regulations](#) and the relevant examination policy as listed under 2.1.

### 3. Roles and Responsibilities

- 3.1 It is the responsibility of examiners, University of Manchester staff and PGRs to adhere to this policy.

### 4. Duration of the Re-Submission Period

- 4.1 The resubmission period begins from the date stipulated in the recommendation letter sent to the candidate detailing the revisions required. A copy of the letter and the examiners' statement must also

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<sup>1</sup> Enquiries regarding any deviation from policy should initially be directed to the appropriate PGR office and then to the Faculty PGR office and Faculty Associate Dean for Postgraduate Research where appropriate. If necessary, cases may be referred on to the Associate Vice-President for Postgraduate Research and/or the Postgraduate Researchers Management Group (PRMG) via the Research Degrees and Researcher Development Team.

be sent to the candidate's supervisor and the internal examiner at the same time, and the date of the letter recorded on the candidate's record.

- 4.2 If the examiners selected either recommendation B(i) or B(ii) at first examination (doctoral and MPhil examination only), candidates normally have up to six months in which to revise and resubmit their thesis for a second further examination and may be granted up to 12 months in which to revise and resubmit their thesis for a second further examination.<sup>2</sup>
- 4.3 If examiners selected recommendation B(iii) at first examination (doctoral and MPhil examination only), candidates have up to one year to conduct further research, revise and resubmit their thesis for a second further examination.
- 4.4 If examiners selected a B recommendation at first examination (MSc by Research and Master of Enterprise only) candidates are normally required to revise and resubmit the dissertation within four months.
- 4.5 If examiners selected recommendation C(iii) at first examination (doctoral examination only), candidates have up to six months in which to revise and submit their thesis for consideration for the degree of Master of Philosophy (MPhil) at second examination.

## 5. Supervisory Arrangements

- 5.1 The candidate is required to meet with their supervisor/s once the examiners' statement has been uploaded via the University's progression monitoring system in order to discuss preparations for the revisions.
- 5.2 The candidate should be advised to consult with the internal examiner only if further clarification is required on the examiners' statement of revisions.
- 5.3 Regular contact must be maintained between the supervisor/s and the candidate throughout the resubmission period. The frequency and format of the meetings will be determined by the nature and extent of the work required as detailed by the examiners in their statement and should be agreed in advance by the supervisor/s and candidate.
- 5.4 Where a supervisor is no longer able to provide supervision, alternative [supervision arrangements](#) must be made by the Head of School.

## 6. Procedures Prior to Re-Examination – Notice of Resubmission

- 6.1 Candidates must follow the same procedure for giving notice of resubmission as with first submission by completing a Notice of Resubmission Form available 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 thesis to enable preparations for the examination to be made.

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<sup>2</sup> The decision to allow additional time for a candidate to resubmit their thesis must be based on the quantity of work required and the length of time it is feasible to complete the corrections. The decision must not be based on personal circumstances of the candidate.

## 7. Procedures Prior to Re-Examination – Resubmission of Thesis / Dissertation

- 7.1 Candidates must follow the same procedure for thesis / dissertation submission as detailed in the relevant examinations policy for first submission.

## 8. Re-Examination – Timeframe

- 8.1 The procedures and timeframes for examination of a resubmitted thesis / dissertation are identical to a first submission: examiners must not normally take longer than twelve working weeks to read and assess the thesis / dissertation and write their pre-oral examination reports where required. If an oral examination is required it must take place without undue delay, normally within twelve working weeks of the re-submitted thesis / dissertation being sent to the examiners.
- 8.2 Where a further oral examination is required all parties should refer to the [Oral Examination Procedure for Postgraduate Research Degrees](#).
- 8.3 Candidates must be available to attend the oral examination from the time that the thesis / dissertation is submitted. Candidates may only delay their oral examination in very exceptional circumstances and must apply to the appropriate PGR office for permission.
- 8.4 Examiners may waive the requirement to hold an oral examination if they are all in agreement that the degree should be awarded.
- 8.5 Where an oral examination is not required, the relevant completed Examiners Report Form (Resubmission) must be uploaded to the University's progression monitoring system via the internal examiner or independent chair within eight weeks of the thesis / dissertation first being sent to the examiners.

## 9. Examination of a Resubmitted Thesis / Dissertation

- 9.1 The examination of a resubmitted thesis / dissertation should normally be undertaken by the original examiners. Where this is not possible, replacement examiners must be selected and approved following the procedure detailed in the University's [Nomination of Examiners & Independent Chairs for Postgraduate Research Degree Examinations Policy](#).<sup>3</sup>
- 9.2 Examiners will be sent the resubmitted thesis / dissertation with the original examiners' report and statement of revisions and a new Pre-Oral Examination Report Form (to be completed by each examiner only where it is agreed that an oral examination is required) and Examiners' Report Form (Resubmission). The thesis / dissertation should include a reference page (or pages), compiled by the candidate, detailing the revised paragraphs and pages in accordance with the original statement

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<sup>3</sup> Any deviation from this process will only be considered in the most exceptional circumstances and would need to be discussed with and approved by the Associate Vice-President for Research and the candidate.

of revisions. New examiners may request to see a copy of the original thesis / dissertation, if required.

- 9.3 Examiners must only assess the thesis / dissertation and documents sent to them via the appropriate PGR office.
- 9.4 In cases where the candidate has formally resubmitted a thesis / dissertation and it has not been adequately revised in accordance with examiners' instructions, examiners are not permitted to return the thesis / dissertation to the candidate for further amendment prior to re-examination. If it has not been adequately revised, the thesis / dissertation may be rejected and any further examination will not be permitted.
- 9.5 A specific examiners' report form is provided for use in the examination of a resubmitted thesis / dissertation: either Examiners' Report Form (Resubmission) for doctoral degrees OR Examiners' Report Form (Resubmission) for MPhil / MSc by Research degrees. Unlike the first submission forms, these forms do not allow for the recommendation of thesis / dissertation referral (Category B).
- 9.6 Further guidance on the joint Examiner Report Form can be found in the relevant main examination policy: either [Examination of Doctoral Degrees Policy](#), [Examination of Master of Philosophy Degrees \(MPhil\) Policy](#) or [Examination of Master of Science \(MSc by Research\) Policy](#).
- 9.7 When conducting the re-examination examiners should pay attention to the original statement of revisions. Examiners may only make recommendations on material that the candidate has revised since first submission.
- 9.8 A candidate whose thesis / dissertation is referred under recommendations B(ii) and B(iii) at first examination is required to undergo a second oral examination. However, if the examiners' recommendation upon re-assessment is to award the degree (i.e.; recommendation A(i) or A(ii)) and the examiners are in joint agreement, they may dispense with the second oral examination). Examiners must inform the appropriate PGR office staff immediately if they wish to dispense with the oral examination so that the candidate can be informed.
- 9.9 Candidates referred under recommendation C(iii) at first examination (doctoral examination only) may be required to undergo an oral examination at the discretion of the examiners.

## 10. Recommendations for a Resubmitted Doctoral Degree Thesis

Regardless of which recommendation is selected, examiners are required to jointly complete the appropriate Examiners' Report Form (Resubmission) and submit the form via the University's progression monitoring system within five working days of the oral examination (where one has taken place) or within 8 weeks of the resubmitted thesis having been sent to examiners (where no further oral was required).

There are two categories of recommendations for a resubmitted doctoral thesis: A (award) and C (reject). A resubmitted doctoral thesis does NOT allow the recommendation of referral under category B. Within both A and C categories, examiners must select a sub-recommendation, as follows:

### **10.1 A (i) Award without Corrections**

The examiners should select recommendation A(i) if the thesis is satisfactory in every way and that:

- i. the candidate possesses an appropriate knowledge of the particular field of learning within which the subject of the thesis falls;
- ii. the research which is reported in the thesis contributes a substantial addition to knowledge;
- iii. the results of the research show evidence of originality and independent critical judgement;
- iv. the thesis is presented in a lucid and scholarly manner;
- v. the thesis has been submitted in the form prescribed by University regulations;
- vi. no part of the thesis has previously been submitted for the award of a degree at this or any other University;
- vii. the thesis and the work reported in it are the candidate's own.

### **10.2 A (ii) Award with Minor Corrections**

Recommendation A(ii) should be selected if the examiners are satisfied that the thesis meets the criteria for the degree (see section 10.1) but some minor corrections are necessary to the thesis. Minor corrections permissible under box A(ii) include:

- i. typographical errors;
- ii. minor amendments and/or replacement of, or additions to, the text or to references or diagrams;
- iii. other more extensive corrections to the revised thesis (see also 9.7) 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 thesis.

A list of corrections must be provided by examiners in section four of the Examiners' Report Form (Resubmission) for the benefit of the candidate. Once carried out by the candidate, the corrections must be approved by the internal examiner. There is no requirement for a further oral examination.

The time permitted for minor corrections to be completed by the candidate and approved by the internal examiner is normally no more than four weeks, but exceptionally no more than twelve weeks, from the date the candidate receives the list of corrections via the University's progression monitoring system. The notification that the minor corrections have been approved by the internal examiner must be submitted via the University's progression monitoring system.

The decision to allow additional time for minor corrections to be completed, in twelve weeks from the date the candidate receives the list of corrections, must be based on the quantity of the work required and length of time it is feasible to complete the corrections.

In examinations where there is no internal examiner, the independent chair must ensure that minor corrections are approved by an external examiner or other person nominated by the School and recorded in the University's progression monitoring system within 2 weeks of the submission by the candidate.

The decision to recommend an A(ii) should not be determined by the candidate's personal circumstances. The decision to allow additional time for the candidate to revise and resubmit must be based on the quantity of the work required and length of time it is feasible to complete the work.

The candidate is expected to be available in the period after the oral examination, where appropriate, 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 PGR office for permission to submit the revised thesis later than within the four-week or twelve week timeframe.

Candidates and examiners should refer to the appropriate PGR office if further guidance on minor corrections is required.

### **10.3 C(i): Reject but Award the Degree of Master of Philosophy (MPhil)**

For recommendation C(i), examiners must refer to the degree criteria in the [MPhil Ordinances and Regulations](#) and justify their decision to recommend the award of MPhil. On approval of the recommendation, the candidate must re-submit the thesis, by uploading it to the online institutional repository with a new title page, indicating that it is a master's (and not a doctoral) thesis.

#### **10.4 C(ii) - Reject but Award the degree of Master of Philosophy (MPhil) Subject to Minor Corrections**

For recommendation C(ii), examiners must include a statement detailing the required corrections (see section 9) as part of the Examiners' Report Form. Examiners must refer to the degree criteria in the MPhil Ordinances and Regulations and justify their decision to recommend the award of MPhil, subject to minor corrections.

Where examiners reach a decision to give a C(ii) recommendation for a resubmitted doctoral thesis, examiners must include a statement as part of the Examiners' Report Form, which will be submitted via the University's progression monitoring system and therefore be made available to the candidate. Examiners should give sufficient detail of the defects of the resubmission and recommend ways in which the thesis should be revised in order to make a satisfactory revision of the thesis for the degree of Master of Philosophy (MPhil).

The internal and external examiners must agree this statement and ensure it is uploaded to the University's progression monitoring system within five working days of the examination. The candidate will be contacted by the appropriate PGR office once the result has been confirmed by the appropriate Faculty postgraduate research degrees Committee. Following this communication they can view the report in the University's progression monitoring system with the official written notice of the result.

The time permitted for minor corrections to be completed by the candidate is normally no more than four weeks, but exceptionally no more than twelve weeks from the date the candidate receives the list of corrections available via the University's progression monitoring system. The minor corrections must be approved via the University's progression monitoring system within two weeks of the candidate submitting the corrections.

The decision to allow additional time for minor corrections to be completed, up to twelve weeks from the date the candidate receives the list of corrections, must be based on the quantity of the work required and length of time it is feasible to complete the corrections.

On completion of minor corrections and approval of the recommendation, the candidate must re-submit the thesis with a new title page, indicating that it is a master's (and not a doctoral) thesis.

#### **10.5 C(iv) - Reject**

For recommendation C(iv), examiners must justify their decision not to recommend the doctoral or the MPhil degree in the Examiners' Report Form (Resubmission). When the recommendation of the examiners is not to award a doctoral or MPhil degree, the internal examiner or independent chair, will normally be invited to the next meeting of the appropriate Faculty postgraduate research degrees Committee to assist in its consideration of the case and to answer any questions.

## **11. Recommendations for a Resubmitted Master of Philosophy (MPhil) Degree Thesis**

Regardless of which recommendation is selected, examiners are required to jointly complete the appropriate Examiners' Report Form (Resubmission) and submit the form via the internal examiner or independent chair in the University's progression monitoring system. This should be submitted within five working days of the oral examination (where one has taken place) or within 8 weeks of the resubmitted thesis having been sent to examiners (where no further oral was required).

There are two categories of recommendations for a resubmitted Master of Philosophy (MPhil) degree: A (award) and C (reject). A resubmitted MPhil thesis does NOT allow the recommendation of referral under category B.

### **11.1 A(i) – Award MPhil without Corrections**

The examiners should select recommendation A(i) if the thesis is satisfactory in every way and that:

- i. the results of the research show evidence of the capacity of the candidate to pursue research and scholarship and represent original work;
- ii. the thesis is presented in a lucid and scholarly manner;
- iii. the thesis has been submitted in the form prescribed by University regulations and policy;
- iv. no part of the thesis has previously been submitted for the award of a degree at this or any other University;
- v. the thesis and the work reported in it are the candidate's own.

### **11.2 A(ii) – Award MPhil Subject to Minor Corrections**

Recommendation A(ii) should be selected if the examiners are satisfied that the thesis meets the criteria for the MPhil degree (see 11.1) but some minor corrections are necessary to the thesis. Examiners should follow the same procedure and guidance as for doctoral minor corrections as detailed in 10.2.

### **11.3 C – Reject**



For recommendation C, examiners must justify their decision not to recommend the MPhil degree in the Examiners' Report Form - MPhil (Resubmission). When the recommendation of the examiners is not to award an MPhil degree, the internal examiner, or independent chair, will normally be invited to the next meeting of the appropriate Faculty postgraduate research degrees Committee to assist in its consideration of the case and to answer any questions.

## **12. Recommendations for a Resubmitted Master of Science (MSc) Degree Dissertation**

Regardless of which recommendation is selected, examiners are required to jointly complete the appropriate Examiners' Report Form (Resubmission) and submit the form via the internal examiner or independent chair in the University's progression monitoring system. This should be submitted within five working days of the oral examination (where one has taken place) or within 8 weeks of the resubmitted thesis having been sent to examiners (where no further oral was required).

There are two categories of recommendations for a resubmitted Master of Science (MSc) degree: A (award) and C (reject). A resubmitted Master of Science (MSc) does NOT allow the recommendation of referral under category B.

### **12.1 A(i) – Award MSc without Corrections**

The examiners should select recommendation A(i) if the dissertation is satisfactory in every way and that:

- vi. the results of the research show evidence of the capacity of the candidate to pursue research and scholarship and represent original work;
- vii. the dissertation is presented in a lucid and scholarly manner;
- viii. the dissertation has been submitted in the form prescribed by University regulations and policy;
- ix. no part of the thesis has previously been submitted for the award of a degree at this or any other University;
- x. the dissertation and the work reported in it are the candidate's own.

### **12.2 A(ii) – Award MSc Subject to Minor Corrections**

Recommendation A(ii) should be selected if the examiners are satisfied that the dissertation meets the criteria for the MSc degree (see 12.1) but some minor corrections are necessary to the dissertation. Examiners should follow the same procedure and guidance as for doctoral minor corrections as detailed in 10.4.

### **12.3 C – Reject**

For recommendation C, examiners must justify their decision not to recommend the MSc degree in the Examiners' Report Form - MSc (Resubmission). When the recommendation of the examiners is not to award an MSc degree, the internal examiner, or independent chair, will normally be invited to the next meeting of the appropriate Faculty postgraduate research degrees Committee to assist in its consideration of the case and to answer any questions.

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| 7                         | April 2024 | Update to clarify that any deviation from the policy on appointing new examiners (where the original examiners are unable to act) will require approval from the AVP for Research (footnote to 9.1). |
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