

The University of Manchester

PGR Examination policies

June 2016

Summary of changes

The following policy documents are presented to Senate:

- Examination of Doctoral Degrees Policy
- Examination of Master of Philosophy (MPhil) Degrees Policy
- Resubmission and Re-examination of Postgraduate Research Degrees Policy
- Nomination of Examiners and Independent Chairs for Postgraduate Research Degree Examinations Policy

The current policy documents can be found at the following link:

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

The PGR Examination policy documents have been re-drafted based on a full review process. The following points outline the main changes to the policy.

Summary of changes to PGR examinations policies

The changes have been requested from a variety of sources and MDC has fully considered all revisions and approved the final drafts:

- Feedback from Faculty and School colleagues via an open consultation process
- Feedback from the Graduate Administrators Group (GAG)
- Feedback from appeals cases and recommendations made as a result of OIA cases
- Feedback from examiners
- Queries raised since the last version of the thesis was published

General changes to all policies:

- Consistency - The term *panel* has been replaced by *committee* throughout and the Associate Dean title has been standardised to 'Associate Dean for Postgraduate Research'
- Any incorrect links have been updated
- The ordering of some paragraphs has been updated so some sections have been moved and some section numbers have been updated
- Reference to contacting the Graduate office or completion of specific forms has been removed in some areas as this functionality is now delivered through the online system (eProg)
- Text has been updated to provide more clarity, reduce ambiguity and remove duplication

A. Examination of Doctoral Degrees Policy

1. Section 1.1; Master of surgery (ChM) has been removed and Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) has been added. Professional Doctorates are included but the full list of types has been removed
2. Section 2.4 – text added: “Where a doctoral programme includes a taught component, candidates must satisfactorily complete all *requirements of all* elements of the programme to the required standard to receive the award.
3. Section 4.1 - text added; (except where the thesis is alternative format as there may be sections that are co-authored. The copyright statement at the beginning of the thesis must make it clear which sections are collaborative or not the student’s own work to enable the examiners to assure themselves that the thesis and the research it reports are the candidate’s own work.)
4. Section 7 – additional information has been provided in relation to University responsibilities under the Disability Discrimination Act.
5. Section 10.1. The timeframe for the oral examination to take place from the date the thesis is sent to the examiners has been amended to state ‘normally within 12 working weeks’ rather than ‘within eight weeks and in no case beyond 12 weeks’.
6. Section 12.3. The following text has been added “Where the thesis 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.”
7. Section 12.6 – text has been revised to make it clear that the Internal Examiner makes necessary arrangements such as booking of a suitable venue.
8. Section 13.5 has been updated to make it clearer regarding student access to facilities
9. Section 17.1.vii has been reworded to make it clearer what should happen when an external examiner is from outside the UK and the oral exam cannot be held in Manchester within the required timeframe
10. Section 17.1xx - text added regarding conduct of the examination in a language other than English
11. The section on Industrial Action (previously 18.2) has been removed as it was felt not to be appropriate in this policy
12. Section 19.2 - text added to clarify the timeframe for feedback to the student following the viva; “Where possible the candidate should be informed of the outcome of the examination within 5 working days of the meeting. However, where a recommendation is yet to be agreed an early communication may be to inform the student that the examiners require more time to discuss the final recommendation.”
13. Section 19.6 – the timeframe for uploading the completed examiner report form following viva has been extended from 3 days to 5 days
14. Section 22.1.2 – text has been made more explicit to clarify that the allocated time given to a student for them to undertake corrections and resubmit their thesis does not include the re-examination period.
15. Section 22.1.2 – text has been made more explicit to clarify that where additional time is given to a candidate to undertake further corrections or resubmit their thesis, it should be based on the quantity of work required and the length of time of which it is feasible to complete the corrections, rather than the student’s personal circumstances.
16. Section 24.3 – Biis have been included in the list of recommendations
17. Section 27 text added; “If the External Examiner has concerns relating to standards within the institution they should approach the internal examiner in the first instance. Once all internal procedures have been exhausted including a confidential report to the Vice-President (Teaching, Learning and Students), they have the right to contact the QAA (www.qaa.ac.uk/complaints/concerns/pages/default.aspx)”

B. Examination of Master of Philosophy (MPhil) Degrees Policy

1. All Doctoral changes also included in the MPhil Exams policy where appropriate.
2. Section 5.1.1 - Added definition of an MPhil
3. Section 7; Notice of submission, has been moved to section 2.5 and the section on Industrial action has been removed therefore; the numbering throughout the document has shifted
4. Section 10 and section 13.4 - the timeframe for when the oral examination should take place has been extended from 8 weeks to 12 weeks
5. Section 14 - text has been added to clarify that an oral examination is not always required for an MPhil award

C. Resubmission and Re-examination of Postgraduate Research Degrees Policy

1. All changes made to the doctoral and MPhil exams policies have been reflected in the Resubmission and Re-examination policy.
2. Section 5 has been updated to clarify that students must be available to attend a viva from the time the thesis is submitted and should only request a delay in exceptional circumstances

D. Nomination of Examiners and Independent Chairs for Postgraduate Research Degrees Policy

1. All changes made to the doctoral and MPhil exams policies are included in the Nomination of Examiners and Independent Chairs where appropriate
2. Section 6.2ii – text amended: “The external examiner must not: be either a current or former member of staff of The University of Manchester or its affiliated colleges unless at least *five* ~~six~~ years have elapsed since he/she relinquished the post;”
3. Section 6.3xi – text added: “All external examiners of any nationality must have the right to work (RTW) in the UK. It is the School’s responsibility to check that the University is provided with the relevant documentation from the external regarding their RTW status.”
4. Section 6.3xii – text added: “Consideration should always be given (where possible) to the availability of external examiners within the UK. However, where it is necessary to appoint an examiner outside of the UK as they are the most appropriate examiner for the field of research, the supervisor must seek approval from the PGR Director/Tutor.”
5. Section 7.2 – text added to provide further clarification on the internal examiner restrictions
6. Section 7.2 – text added to outline that the students advisor may be appointed as internal examiner if they have not had academic involvement with the candidate’s project.
7. Section 7.3iii – text added: “An internal examiner inexperienced in the University of Manchester postgraduate research degree examination process should have an independent chair present, who is not required to have expertise in the work to be examined but is experienced in the examination process.”
8. Section 7.3iv – text added: “An internal examiner must have been through the examination process at least once to be considered an ‘experienced’ examiner.”
9. Section 7.4 – text added to clarify the duties of an internal examiner:
10. Section 8.3vii and viii – text added to clarify the role of the independent chair where the internal examiner is inexperienced or where there is no internal examiner