MANCHESTER 1824
The University of Manchester

Presentation of Theses Policy

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1. Introduction and Purpose

1.1 This policy details the University of Manchester requirements for the preparation and submission of doctoral and MPhil theses at the University of Manchester.

2. Scope and definitions

2.1 This policy is applicable to full and part-time Postgraduate Researchers (PGRs) on the following degrees:

- Doctoral degrees: Doctor of Philosophy (PhD);
- Doctor of Medicine (MD);
- Doctor of Business Administration (DBA);
- Professional, Engineering and Enterprise Doctorates;
- Master of Philosophy (MPhil).

3. Roles and Responsibilities

3.1 It is the responsibility of PGRs as defined in 2.1 to adhere to this policy when preparing and submitting their thesis.

4. General Submission Information

4.1 All PGRs are required to submit electronic versions of their thesis (examination, resubmission and final corrected versions) via their eThesis tasks page in eProg as a single Portable Document Format (PDF) file and plain-text metadata record. This includes all doctoral, MPhil and research Masters PGRs.

4.2 Candidates may submit their thesis in journal format by incorporating sections that are suitable for submission for publication, or have been accepted for publication, or already published in a peer-reviewed journal or in another media suitable for dissemination that is appropriate to the discipline covered by the thesis (see section 13).

4.3 Candidates submitting a standard format thesis may include published work within the appendices of the thesis. Appendices should be numbered in accordance with the requirements detailed in section 5.

4.4 Candidates may include a PDF of the reprint(s) appended to the PDF of the main text. When including a reprint PDF, the candidate must include a one page description summarising the reprint material and the page must use the pagination of the thesis.

4.5 Candidates submitting a thesis that has a creative and/or practical element may submit their research in the form of a written thesis and an appropriate practical component as detailed in section 10.

4.6 In accordance with the Regulations, theses submitted for PhD, PhD by Enterprise, EngD and MD degrees must not normally exceed 80,000 words of main text, including footnotes, and endnotes. MPhil and Professional Doctorate theses must not normally exceed 50,000 words of main text, including footnotes and endnotes. Prior permission from the appropriate Faculty Doctoral Academy is required for submission of a thesis longer than the prescribed length.[1]

4.7 For a PhD by Enterprise, the thesis must contain a business plan—usually as the final chapter—demonstrating the research's commercial, social, or practical application and a clear path to impact. This is included within the 80,000-word limit. PhD by Enterprise candidates are advised to consult their programme handbook for specific information regarding the presentation and structure of the business plan chapter.

4.8 Where quotations/data in other languages is included in the thesis along with the English translation, only the English translation should be included in the thesis word count.

4.9 Candidates must ensure that material that is authored by a third-party and used in their thesis is free of any copyright restrictions and/or they have obtained a licence or permission to use these materials. Candidates should ensure that any such licence/permission extends to the use of the materials by The University for administrative purposes, including examination and preservation of their work. Furthermore, if the candidate intends to make their electronic thesis available to others for download they should ensure the licence for use of these third-party materials extends to this use. Alternatively, candidates may make available to others a redacted version of their thesis which excludes the third-party material.

4.10 Where internet citations are used in a thesis, candidates should include the website detail and the date they accessed the site next to each individual reference. Candidates should discuss the most appropriate referencing style with their supervisor/s.

4.11 It is the candidate's responsibility to ensure that the thesis is checked for typographical errors. Any person involved with professionally proofreading a thesis should solely be checking for grammatical/spelling errors, and should not comment on the content of the thesis. Further guidance on proofreading can be found in the University statement on proofreading.

[1] For clarity, the "main text" refers exclusively to the core chapters that present the argument and findings of the thesis including the footnotes and endnotes. Preliminary pages (such as the abstract, lay abstract, table of contents, lists of tables/figures/abbreviations, about-the-author pages, and Generative AI disclosure statements) and other elements (such as the bibliography, list of works cited, and appendices) are not included in the word count.

5. Research Data Submitted with a Thesis

5.1 Research Data should be managed in adherence with the principles and requirements given in the Research Data Management Policy.

5.2 Research data to be included as part of a candidate's final electronic submission can be deposited in the University's supported institutional data repository, Figshare.

5.3 Please also refer to the Guidance for Submitting and Sharing Research Data.

6. English Language Requirements

6.1 All theses must be written in UK English unless discipline standards dictate the use of US English. Quotations, however, may be given in the language in which they were written.

6.2 In exceptional circumstances, a candidate may apply to the University for permission to submit a thesis predominantly written in a language other than English.

- The request must be fully justified on academic grounds.
- The request must be submitted by the end of year one of the candidate's registration and accompanied by a supporting statement from the supervisor/s.
- The main supervisor and at least one member of staff independent of the supervisory team must attend a meeting to discuss the application to submit a thesis in a language other than English.
- The doctoral academy may reject the application if the candidate cannot provide a compelling reason for submitting in a language other than English.
- If approved the abstract of a thesis written in another language must also be presented in English and an extended English language summary of the thesis (5,000-10,000 words) including the table of contents, an introduction, brief outline of each chapter and conclusion should also be provided.

7. Formatting

7.1 For the main text, double or 1.5 spacing in a font type and size which ensures readability must be used (for example 12 point is recommended in a font such as Arial, Verdana, Tahoma, Trebuchet, Calibri, Times, Times New Roman, Palatino or Garamond); single spacing may be used for quotations, footnotes, references and preliminary pages.

7.2 The style of bibliographic citations and references may be chosen by the candidate but must be consistent throughout the thesis; general guidance should be provided by the candidate's supervisor/s.

7.3. Examiners / candidates may wish to print and bind copies of the thesis so it is recommended that the margin at the binding edge of any page be no less than 40mm; other margins no less than 15mm.

7.4. Page numbering must consist of one single sequence of Arabic numerals (i.e. 1, 2, 3 …) throughout the thesis, starting with the title page as page number 1.

7.5 Page numbers must be displayed on all pages except the title page(s) and any COVID-19 Impact Statement. The pagination sequence will include not only the text of the thesis but also the preliminary pages, diagrams, tables, figures, illustrations, appendices, references etc.

7.6 Roman numerals must not be used for page numbering.

7.7 Blank pages must include the text 'Blank page'.

7.8.The main text of the thesis should normally be left justified to aid accessibility and readability of the thesis.

7.9 Where headers are used they must be consistently applied throughout the thesis and should not include the name of the candidate.

7.10 Figures or images used in the thesis must be of sufficient size and clarity.

8. Required Pages

8.1 The following (a-i) must be included as preliminary pages of the thesis in the order given:

a. COVID-19 IMPACT STATEMENT

If appropriate, (see section 10).

b. TITLE PAGE

A title page giving:

- the full title of the thesis;
- a statement as follows: 'A thesis submitted to The University of Manchester for the degree of Doctor of [insert degree title] in the Faculty of .....' (please refer to University Regulation X for a list of correct Faculty and School titles and refer to University Regulation XI for the correct long and short form of the degree title).
- the full title of the degree should be stated not the abbreviated form;
- the year of presentation (not including the month);
- the candidate's first name, middle name stated as an initial, and the candidate's family name (the same as the name under which he or she is currently registered at the University) - PGRs can also include their name in their native language / script alongside the English translation); and
- the name of the candidate's School/Division/Department.

Please refer to Appendix 1 to see a sample title page.

c. LIST OF CONTENTS

A list of contents, giving all relevant sub-divisions of the thesis and a page number for each item.
The final word count, including footnotes and endnotes, must be inserted at the bottom of the contents page.

d. OTHER LISTS

Lists of tables, figures, diagrams, photographs, abbreviations etc. If a thesis contains such lists it is required that a separate list of each item, as appropriate, is provided immediately after the contents page(s). Such lists must give the page number of each item on the list.

e. ABSTRACT

A short abstract of the contents of the thesis. The abstract must not be more than one page.

f. DECLARATION

A declaration stating:
EITHER:
that no portion of the work referred to in the thesis has been submitted in support of an application for another degree or qualification of this or any other university or other institute of learning;

OR:
what portion of the work referred to in the thesis has been submitted in support of an application for another degree or qualification of this or any other university or other institute of learning. This should include reference to joint authorship of published materials which might have been included in a thesis submitted by another student to this university or any other university or other institute of learning.

g. COPYRIGHT STATEMENT

The following four notes on copyright and the ownership of intellectual property rights must be included as written below:

- The author of this thesis (including any appendices and/or schedules to this thesis) owns certain copyright or related rights in it (the “Copyright”) and they have given the University of Manchester certain rights to use such Copyright, including for administrative purposes.
- Copies of this thesis, either in full or in extracts and whether in hard or electronic copy, may be made only in accordance with the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 (as amended) and regulations issued under it or, where appropriate, in accordance with licensing agreements which the University has from time to time. This page must form part of any such copies made.
- The ownership of certain Copyright, patents, designs, trademarks and other intellectual property (the “Intellectual Property”) and any reproductions of copyright works in the thesis, for example graphs and

tables (“Reproductions”), which may be described in this thesis, may not be owned by the author and may be owned by third parties. Such Intellectual Property and Reproductions cannot and must not be made available for use without the prior written permission of the owner(s) of the relevant Intellectual Property and/or Reproductions.

- Further information on the conditions under which disclosure, publication and commercialisation of this thesis, the Copyright and any Intellectual Property and/or Reproductions described in it may take place is available in the University IP Policy, in any relevant Thesis restriction declarations deposited in the University Library, the University Library’s regulations and in the University’s policy on the Presentation of Theses.

h. LIST OF THESIS REVISIONS (resubmitted thesis only)

Resubmitted theses must include a reference page/s to help the examiners locate any revised paragraphs and pages in accordance with the list of revisions received.

The page/s should be included before the title page and any COVID-19 Impact Statement and must be removed from the final version of the thesis post re-examination.

9. Other Pages (non-compulsory)

9.1 The preliminary pages may also include the following:

a. A lay abstract may be included in addition to the standard abstract described in section 4.1e. The lay abstract should give a concise description of the research detailed in the thesis using non-technical language for an audience unfamiliar with the research area. The purpose of the lay abstract is to publicise the University’s research activity to other departments of the University and to external organisations such as the media, industry and government.

b. A dedication, acknowledgement, and similar. These must appear after the compulsory pages listed in section 8. Short items may be combined on the same page.

c. A brief statement for External Examiners, giving the candidate’s degree(s) and research experience, even if the latter consists only of the work done for this thesis. This may be untitled or it may be headed ‘Preface’ or ‘The Author’ or similar.

d. An AI Declaration acknowledging the use of an AI tool or system. The declaration should provide an overview of the tools used and the outputs. Please see the example below:

"Generative AI Disclosure: I used [AI tool name] to assist in idea generation, image creation, and for feedback on grammar and content. I implemented some of its recommendations. I used [AI tool name] to explore ideas for visuals (one of which is used and cited on page 2)"

e. A content notification may be included where the PGR believes that a thesis contains language and/or imagery that is potentially offensive and/or triggering. Such content includes, but is not limited to, descriptions of sexual violence, references to self-harm or racially charged language. PGRs should refer to the PGR Thesis Content Notification Guidance for further information. PGRs should also discuss inclusion of a content notification with their supervisor/s prior to submission.

10. COVID-19 Impact Statements

10.1 Candidates who were registered on their programme before September 2022 who wish to make their examiners aware of the impact COVID-19 has had on their research plans and thesis may include an Impact Statement for consideration during the examination process.

10.2 The COVID-19 Impact Statement should be included in the examination and/or resubmission thesis immediately before the title page (it should be removed from the final version of the thesis post-examination).

10.3 The Impact Statement should include the following information:

- Details on how disruption caused by COVID-19 has impacted the research (for example, an inability to collect/analyse data as a result of travel restrictions/restricted access to labs/additional caring and health responsibilities - 500 words maximum);
- A description of how the planned work would have fitted within the thesis' narrative (e.g. through method development, development of analytical skills or advancement of hypotheses - 500 words maximum);
- A summary of any decisions / actions taken to mitigate for any work or data collection/analyses that were prevented by COVID-19 (500 words maximum).

10.4 PGRs are encouraged to discuss the statement with their supervisory team before submitting the statement alongside the thesis.

11. Final Submission

11.1 Candidates must not make any amendments to their thesis until they have been notified officially by the appropriate Faculty Doctoral Academy of the outcome of their examination and been informed of the next steps to be taken.

11.2 Once examination (including any required re-examination) of the thesis has been completed candidates must submit an electronic copy of their final thesis only if the Examiners have recommended A(i).

11.3 Candidates recommended A(ii) must only submit their final electronic thesis after their corrections have been approved by the Internal Examiner.

11.4 Submission of the final electronic thesis must be identical in content (apart from any corrections required by the Examiners) to the theses previously submitted for examination.

11.5 Candidates will only receive their official degree award letter (and therefore be eligible to graduate and receive their degree certificate) once the appropriate Faculty Doctoral Academy has acknowledged receipt of the electronic copy of the final thesis.

12. Access Settings / Restrictions

12.1 All examination, resubmission and final theses are deposited via your eThesis task page in eProg.

12.2 Electronic copies of the final thesis will be retained by the University for use as applicable.

12.3 The author of the thesis is expected to make the thesis Open Access within 12 months of submission or earlier and is not expected to place any restriction on access to his or her work.

12.4 Access to the final thesis is set as part of the candidate declaration during the submission of the first 'examination' version.

12.5 If it is considered that because of some exceptional circumstances, access to the final thesis should be embargoed or restricted in some way e.g. a formal IP/Copyright contract in place with an additional external collaborator/sponsor the candidate must indicate this at the point of examination submission. All access settings will be subject to the final approval of the main supervisor.

12.6 The University reserves the right to restrict access to a thesis that was initially made open access without prior permission from the author. This is to accommodate where, for example, copyright infringements are subsequently reported to The University.

12.7 Doctoral Academies must develop contingency plans in the event of technical difficulties for the submission of theses in accordance with the University's policy on eAssessment.

13. Journal Format Theses

13.1 The Journal Format thesis allows a 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 journal format thesis must conform to the same standards expected for a standard thesis and candidates should follow the guidance detailed in this document.

13.2 Materials included in the journal format thesis may include those which are solely and/or partly authored by the candidate and may be already published, accepted for publication, submitted for publication in externally refereed contexts such as journals and conference proceedings or in a format which is suitable for publication.

13.3 The thesis should remain an original contribution to the field of research by the PGR, regardless of the form of the thesis. The candidate should use the introductory section of their thesis to explain and justify in full the nature and extent of the candidate's own contribution and the contribution of co-authors and other collaborators to the publications presented. A significant proportion of the researched materials should be derived from original research undertaken after the date the PGR initially registered with this University.

13.4 Any candidate wishing to submit their thesis in journal format should discuss their intention with their supervisor. Depending on how the research develops and the analysis of data there is flexibility on when candidates have to make the decision regarding the type of submission but it may not be until the end of year two or three for full time students and the end of year four or five for part time students. The candidate should then declare their intention on thesis format on the Notice of Submission form.

13.5 The number of publications included in the journal format thesis may vary according to the discipline and is not prescribed, but should reflect the quantity, quality and originality of research and analysis expected of a candidate submitting a standard thesis. There is no upper limit, but three to five papers or equivalent results chapters is typical. Candidates should also speak to their Doctoral Academy about any discipline–specific guidance and consult with their main supervisor for advice.

13.6 The work must constitute a body of publication tending towards a coherent and continuous thesis, rather than a series of disconnected publications. As such, any publications should be adapted and integrated within the structure of the thesis. Any sections of the thesis which are published or in publishable format should be clearly identified.

13.7 It is recommended that separate versions of the paper be included and that the pagination sequence should flow throughout the thesis rather than inserting pre-prints. Ideally, to ease readability, figures/tables and accompanying legends should be included at the appropriate point in the text of the papers, and not at the end of the text as would be typical for a manuscript submitted for publication.

13.8 Where this is not possible, the thesis may include copies or offprints of journal articles, book chapters etc., which already have page numbers. The pages of the publications themselves should not be included in the pagination sequence of the submission. Candidates should insert a page before each publication on which is displayed the publication number, publication title, and the page number of the thesis. For example, if the publications section starts on p75, insert a page before the first publication on which is detailed the name and number of the publication and p75. The first publication will then follow, with its own pagination. Before the second publication insert another page on which is detailed the name and number of the second publication and p76, and so on.

13.9 Any work submitted within the journal format thesis must be substantially different from any work which may have previously been submitted by the candidate for any degree at this or any other institution.

13.10 It is essential that the journal format thesis includes detailed and critical analysis of the work and methods used, since sections formatted for publication / dissemination may not already include this level of detail. The structure of the journal format thesis should include the following:

- All required pages detailed in section 8 of this document
- Rationale for submitting the thesis in a journal format and an account of how the thesis format has been constructed.
- Context of the research which should incorporate sections / chapters defining the rationale of the investigation and the strategy employed during the research as demonstrated in the thesis.
- Review of previous research including sections summarising and synthesising previous research in the field of investigation.
- Methodology detailing the methods employed during the research and a detailed critical analysis of those methods and the information they provided.
- Presentation of results and their analysis in a format suitable for presentation in a peer-reviewed journal and/or in conventional thesis chapters as in the standard PhD thesis.
- Summary / conclusion drawing together the various outcomes of the work into a coherent synthesis and indicating directions for future work.
- References and appendices should be included as in the standard PhD thesis

13.11 The incorporation of publication-style chapters in the thesis will inevitably lead to some duplication since each publication-style chapter will have self-contained components that will overlap with parts of the other sections of the thesis. As a result, such a thesis might well be expected to be longer than a standard doctoral/MPhil thesis on the same topic. The maximum length of the journal format doctoral thesis should not normally exceed 90,000 words of main text, including footnotes and endnotes. The maximum length of the journal format MPhil/Professional Doctorate thesis should not normally exceed 60,000 words of main text, including footnotes and endnotes

13.12 As with the standard Doctoral/MPhil thesis, Examiners should satisfy themselves that the journal format thesis meets the requirements of the doctoral degree as prescribed in the appropriate regulations and policies. The fact that a thesis contains material that has been published or accepted for publication does not guarantee that the Examiner will recommend the award for which the candidate is being examined.

13.13 Candidates should also refer to the supplementary journal format theses guidance document.

14. Practice-Based Research Submissions

14.1 The practice-based PhD degree allows candidates to request permission to submit material for assessment in a media other than that described in the standard or journal format thesis guidelines. The practice-based PhD is distinguished from other doctoral degrees in that a major element of the submission is an original creative work or words, which has been created by the candidate specifically for the submission of the award. Apart from the inclusion of such materials, the practice-based thesis must

conform to the same standards expected for a standard PhD thesis and candidates should follow the guidance detailed in this document.

14.2 In the same way as a traditional PhD thesis, the submission must make a significant contribution to original knowledge and understanding of the field and the candidate must demonstrate a critical knowledge of the research methods appropriate to the discipline.

14.3 The candidate should use the introductory section of their thesis to explain and justify in full the nature and extent of their own contribution and the contribution of co-authors and other collaborators to the research presented.

14.4 Any candidate wishing to submit a practice-based PhD, who is not already registered on a practice-based PhD programme, must first prepare a written request, which includes giving an outline of the proposed research structure, providing academic justification for the change in thesis presentation and permission from their supervisor and submit this to the appropriate Faculty Doctoral Academy for consideration by the Faculty's postgraduate research degrees panel or equivalent. The request should specify why the practice-based format is more appropriate for the research project demonstrating how they will take full advantage of the creative and/or practical element and should contain the following information:

- PhD title
- Candidate start date
- Candidate expected end date
- Main Supervisor
- Co-Supervisor
- Advisor
- School
- Proposed balance of written and practical components to be submitted
- Further details about any practical submission i.e. what form it will take, how it will meet the University's practice-based PhD requirements outlined in section 10
- Proposed arrangements for the assessment of the submission including examiners, criteria to be used, where the oral will take place
- Any issues about specific needs for supporting the student due to the nature of the research etc. – impact on skills training requirements, Supervisory requirements etc.
- Detailed information about how the practical component will be supervised

14.5 Any work submitted for the practice-based PhD degree must be substantially different from any work which may have previously been submitted by the candidate for any degree at this or any other institution.

14.6 The submission as a whole will comprise a thesis of between 20,000-50,000 words and an appropriate practical component (where a programme has a different word limit this will be stated in the Faculty/School handbook). Candidates submit electronic versions of this thesis. The length of the written element should be determined by the nature of the research. Decisions about the balance of the written and practical

component must be made by the end of the first year of the degree for full time candidates (pro-rata for part time). This decision should be made by the supervisor and the student, in accordance with these principles and recorded in writing and forwarded to the relevant graduate office for approval.

14.7 The candidate will be expected through their submission as a whole to establish a methodology and a thesis that will demonstrate the link between their theoretical and practical investigations and conclusions.

14.8 As with the standard doctoral thesis, Examiners should satisfy themselves that the practice-based submission meets the requirements of the doctoral degree as prescribed in the appropriate regulations and policies. The assessment of the balance between the written and practical submissions will form part of the Examiners' remit. It is at each Examiners discretion to satisfy themselves that the balance between the word limit of the thesis and the submitted practical component is appropriate for each candidate.

14.9 In order to allow the Examiners to properly consider the submission as a whole the practical component will be submitted to the Examiners at the same time that the written thesis is submitted. As with a standard PhD, an oral examination of the whole submission will be required.

14.10 If necessary, the Examiners can require the correction or revision and resubmission of either the practical element or the written element or both, in accordance with University regulations.

14.11 Candidates should refer to the relevant Faculty Doctoral Academy for detailed guidance on the specific requirements for thesis submission in these disciplines:

- MPhil in Ethnographic Documentary, School of Social Sciences, Faculty of Humanities
- MPhil in Visual Anthropology, School of Social Sciences, Faculty of Humanities
- PhD in Social Anthropology with Visual Media, School of Social Sciences, Faculty of Humanities
- Practice PhD (Drama), School of Arts, Languages and Cultures, Faculty of Humanities
- PhD in Composition, School of Arts, Languages and Cultures, Faculty of Humanities
- PhD in Creative Writing, School of Arts, Languages and Cultures, Faculty of Humanities
- MPhil in Composition, School of Arts, Languages and Cultures, Faculty of Humanities
- PhD in Composition, School of Arts, Languages and Cultures, Faculty of Humanities
- PhD in Geography by Practice, School of Environment, Education and Development

15. Compliance

15.1 Failure to comply with this policy may result in the Doctoral Academy rejecting the thesis for examination.

Appendix 1

SAMPLE TITLE PAGE

TITLE OF THESIS

A thesis submitted to The University of Manchester for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
in the Faculty of .....

YEAR OF SUBMISSION
(OR YEAR OF RESUBMISSION)

CANDIDATE'S NAME
(full forename, middle initial, full surname)

CANDIDATE'S SCHOOL AND DIVISIONDEPARTMENT

Version amendment history		
Version	Date	Reason for change
12	March 2026	Update to to accommodate the introduction of the PhD by Enterprise programme.

Document control box	
Policy / Procedure title:	Presentation of Theses Policy (PGR)
Lead contact email	Alex.Hinchliffe@manchester.ac.uk
Date updated:	March 2026
Approving body:	MDCSG
Version:	12
Supersedes:	May 2025
Previous review dates:	Sep 2007, Nov 2008, Feb 2013, Jun 2014, June 2017, July 2020, June 2021, Nov 2023, Nov 2024
Next review date:	November 2028
Equality impact outcome:	
Related Statutes, Ordinances, General Regulations:	Staffnet.manchester.ac.uk/rbe/rdrd/ordinancesandregulations
Related policies/procedures/guidance etc	Staffnet.manchester.ac.uk/rbe/rdrd/ordinancesandregulations
Policy owner:	Alex Hinchliffe, Research Degrees and Researcher Development
Lead contact:	Alex Hinchliffe, Research Degrees and Researcher Development