University of Sheffield | Research, Partnerships & Innovation

Guide to the thesis examination process for candidates of research degree programmes

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1.	**INTRODUCTION**	**3**
1.1	Contact details	3
1.2	Requirements for research degree programmes	3
1.3	Criteria for the award of a research degree	4
1.4	Publication format thesis	5
1.5	Practice-bases thesis	6
1.6	PhD and MD by Publication	6
1.7	Yellow sticker scheme	7
1.8	Use of GenAI	8
2.	**PREPARING FOR SUBMISSION OF THE THESIS**	**8**
2.1	General guidance	8
2.2	Appointment of examiners	9
2.3	Academic misconduct	9
3.	**SUBMISSION**	**9**
3.1	Thesis submission and despatch	9
4.	**THE ORAL EXAMINATION (VIVA)**	**9**
4.1	Arrangements for the viva	9
4.2	Conduct of the viva	11
4.3	Summary of viva outcomes	11
5	**AFTER THE VIVA**	**13**
5.1	Results of the viva	13
5.2	Minor or Major Corrections	13
5.3	Resubmission of the thesis	14
5.4	Resubmission outcomes	15
5.5	Resubmission for MPhil	15
6.	**AWARD OF DEGREES**	**16**
6.1	Approval of examiners' recommendations	16
6.2	Etheses and library copies	16
6.3	Receiving the award	17

1. INTRODUCTION

This document provides guidance to PGRs about the thesis submission and examination process. It gives details of the submission and examination process, as well as important information on the University's requirements for research degree programmes and the criteria to be met to be awarded a higher degree by research. It also provides detailed information about the possible outcomes of the viva. This document complements the Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes, which provides more detailed guidance and policies.

Nothing in the content of this guidance takes precedence over University Regulations, which may be subject to amendment.

1.1 Contact details

1.1.1 The PGR Support Team in Research, Partnerships and Innovation is responsible for research student progression and assessment, including the following aspects of the examination process:

- Faculty approval of appointment of examiners.
- Thesis submission and despatch of theses to examiners.
- Faculty approval of examiners' report forms and processing of recommendations.
- Award of degrees.
- Processing of examiners' expenses and external examiners' fees.

1.1.2 General enquiries regarding any aspect of the examination process should be sent to pgr-enquiries@sheffield.ac.uk.
Faculty-specific enquiries should be directed to the following:

- Arts & Humanities: pgrarts@sheffield.ac.uk
- Engineering: pgreng@sheffield.ac.uk
- Health: pgrhealth@sheffield.ac.uk
- Science: pgrsci@sheffield.ac.uk
- Social Sciences: pgrsocsci@sheffield.ac.uk

1.2 Requirements for research degree programmes

1.2.1 Before the award of a higher degree by research can be made each candidate is required to complete a prescribed period of training and research, and:

- present a thesis containing the results of the candidate's research and showing the sources from which the information it contains is derived and the extent to which the candidate has made use of the work of others; and
- pass an oral examination (viva) in matters relevant to the subject of the thesis.

1.2.2 For research degrees which incorporate taught elements and/or coursework, candidates are also required to have satisfactorily completed the taught Master's units/relevant coursework as specified in the University Regulations for each programme (full details of these requirements can be obtained from www.sheffield.ac.uk/calendar).

1.2.3 The oral examination is an integral part of the examination for research degrees and must be held. The purpose of the oral examination is:

- To enable the examiners to assure themselves that the thesis and the research it reports are the candidate's own work.
- To give the candidate an opportunity to demonstrate that they can defend the thesis verbally, clarify any issues that the examiners have identified and discuss the subject of the thesis in its wider disciplinary context.
- 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 thesis falls.
- To ensure that the candidate's knowledge and understanding of the subject are of the standard expected for the award of the degree.

1.2.4 The thesis should normally be written in English. Exceptionally, and with the permission of the faculty, a candidate may present a thesis that is written in another language where this is of demonstrable significance to the impact and dissemination of the research.

1.3 Criteria for the award of a research degree

1.3.1 The examiners are required to review the thesis in the light of the University's criteria for the award of its research degrees.

1.3.2 A candidate for a doctoral degree is required to satisfy the examiners that their thesis:

- Is original work which forms an addition to knowledge;
- Shows evidence of systematic study and of the ability to relate the results of such study to the general body of knowledge in the subject;
- Is worthy of publication either in full or in an abridged form.

1.3.3 They should be able to demonstrate, via the thesis and oral examination, that they can:

- Critically appraise what is and what is not known in their subject area.
- Formulate appropriate questions to probe what is not known.
- Choose and, as necessary, devise appropriate techniques to address such questions.
- Explain to others why these questions are worth asking and why these techniques are the right ones to use to answer them in a realistic and timely manner.
- Employ such techniques rigorously and viably, to produce robust and reliable answers to the questions posed, while remaining open-minded to unexpected or unintended outcomes.
- Accept critical analysis of their work, defending it with rigour but adjusting its interpretation or analysis where required.
- Communicate their findings to the wider research community in a timely, transparent, and accessible manner, acknowledging the contribution of others as appropriate.

1.3.4 In addition, the form of the thesis should be such that it is demonstrably a coherent body of work, i.e. includes a summary, an introduction, a description of the aims of the research, an analytical discussion of the related findings to date, the main results and conclusions, and sets the total work in context.

1.3.5 The examiners' judgement of the thesis should be based on what may reasonably be expected of a diligent and capable candidate after completion of the prescribed period of research and with due regard to the University's criteria for the award of the degree.

1.3.6 The limitations brought by the Covid-19 global pandemic have exacerbated the need to focus on quality not quantity. As such, UKRI has issued guidance advising students to adjust their projects to complete a doctoral-level qualification within the funded period. The Quality Assurance Agency has also published guidance for students and supervisors on doctoral standards in the light of Covid-19.

1.3.7 A thesis for the award of an MPhil degree must demonstrate that it represents a contribution to the subject, either through a record of the candidate's original work or a critical and ordered exposition of existing knowledge; takes due account of previously published work on the subject; is an integrated whole and presents a coherent argument. For a full list of MPhil criteria see: https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/rpi/pgr/examination/degree-criteria#MPhil%20criteria.

1.4 Publication format thesis

1.4.1 Candidates may submit a publication format thesis, which comprises a collection of papers that are in a format suitable for submission for publication in a peer-reviewed journal or other appropriate outlet for academic research. Those sections may comprise scientific papers, book chapters or other appropriate published formats. The papers may appear alongside traditional thesis chapters, or they may comprise the majority of the thesis as a collection of published works that forms a substantial and coherent whole, supported by a commentary that links the submitted works and outlines their coherence and significance.

1.4.2 Materials included in the publication format thesis may include those that are solely and/or partly authored by the candidate. The papers or chapters may have already been published, be accepted for publication, or planned for submission for publication where a specific format is expected. Equally, there may be no intention of submitting them for publication because of the nature of the results, but the purpose is to familiarise the candidate with the conventions of academic publishing. The benefit to candidates in incorporating any such publications into their thesis is that there is no requirement for them to be re-written into a more traditional, monograph-style format thesis, thus saving candidates from undertaking unnecessary additional work.

1.4.3 The thesis must remain an original contribution to the field of research. Within the introductory section to the thesis, the candidate should clearly explain the nature and extent of their contribution to each of the publications presented, as well as the contribution of any co-authors and other collaborators. The materials contained within the thesis must normally be derived from original research undertaken by the candidate while supervised by a University of Sheffield supervisor. There may be exceptional cases where this is not the case, e.g. where a candidate has transferred to Sheffield, having already commenced their research at another university.

1.4.4 The normal expectation is that the candidate should be the primary contributor to the writing of each of the papers, including the design and conduct of the reported research. It is relatively commonplace in some disciplines for candidates to co-author publications with their supervisory team or wider research group. In many disciplines, 'primary contributor' would be denoted by the candidate being the first or last author.

1.4.5 This is not, however, the case in all disciplines. Where a candidate has made a substantial contribution to a paper that they wish to include, but is not the first or last author, they should include a statement clarifying the nature and extent of their contribution, and that of any collaborators, within the thesis, to justify its inclusion.

1.4.6 If there is any doubt as to the specific contribution of the candidate to material with multiple authors, the University retains the right to contact other authors to seek assurance about the candidate's contribution.

1.4.7 More detailed information on the requirements for publication format thesis are available in the Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes: https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/rpi/pgr/examination/formats.

1.5 Practice-based thesis

1.5.1 Candidates in a faculty-approved school undertaking a PhD Practice may either produce a slightly reduced thesis that is supplemented by a practical component, which illustrates aspects of the thesis (for example research methodology or an element of the research findings); *or*, submit a thesis and practical outcome of equal weight, where the thesis is approximately half the length of a full thesis.

1.5.2 The thesis and practical component must show coherence and originality, as required for all research submissions.

1.5.3 The practical component must demonstrate a high level of skill, involve a research inquiry, and be submitted such that it forms a permanent record of the research process, as defined in the Programme Regulations.

1.5.4 The thesis will contextualise the project, offering a retrospective analysis of the process and outcomes, and reflecting on the chosen research methodologies and/or production processes and the relation between them, where applicable.

1.6 PhD and MD by Publication

1.6.1 The University offers the degrees of PhD and MD by Publication. The 'by publication' route is offered only to staff, as an alternative to the standard PhD or MD route. It is designed to enable recognition of the research activities of those members of staff who have published work but have not completed a PhD or MD.

1.6.2 Candidates for the degrees of PhD or MD by Publication will submit their published work (which will normally include only work published in scholarly books and journals within the last eight years) and a substantial commentary not exceeding 15,000 words (PhD) or 10,000 words (MD), linking the published work and outlining its coherence and significance. Candidates must also submit a signed statement regarding the candidate's own contribution, particularly for publications that were produced in collaboration with, or with the assistance of, others, and a CV, focusing on the candidate's research career and the circumstances under which the research work leading to the publications was carried out.

1.6.3 The recommendations available to examiners of PhD and MD by Publication differ from those of standard PhD and MD degrees and are specified on the examiners' report forms. The following outcomes are available:

- Pass
- Undertake minor or major corrections to the commentary only
- Undertake a further oral examination
- Undertake minor or major corrections to the commentary as well as undertaking a further oral examination
- Fail

In the event of a fail, there is no option to resubmit with the same set of papers and candidates may not resubmit within two years of their first candidature.
Please also see: https://staff.sheffield.ac.uk/rpi/pgr/publication.

1.7 Yellow sticker scheme

1.7.1 If a student has a documented disability that affects their written communication, they can attach yellow stickers to their submitted thesis to make examiners aware of this. As the thesis is electronic, the 'yellow sticker' indicator is to make the examiners aware of this, rather than a physical sticker on the work.

Examples of impairments include (but aren't limited to):

- a specific learning difficulty, such as dyslexia
- an autism spectrum condition
- pre-lingual deafness

1.7.2 Eligibility for the scheme is determined by the Disability and Dyslexia Support Service (DDSS), and students are generally provided with a set of stickers following an appointment with a DDSS disability adviser.

1.7.3 The purpose of attaching a yellow sticker to a piece of work (or indicating that a student uses yellow stickers when submitting work electronically) is to:

- to indicate to the examiner that the student has a documented disability which can affect aspects of their written communication;
- to encourage the examiner to give clear, targeted and constructive feedback which is based on the assignment's marking criteria;
- to encourage colleagues to disregard lapses in a student's spelling, grammar, and punctuation that do not affect the intelligibility of their writing.

1.8 Use of GenAI

1.8.1 In common with many other universities, the University is mindful of the potential benefits that GenAI can bring to research, but also aware of the need for its ethical and responsible use. The following guidance document has been developed specifically for use by PGRs: Guidance for PGRs on the use of GenAI. If examiners have any concerns about whether a candidate may have used GenAI inappropriately, or without full acknowledgement, this should be raised with the University at the earliest opportunity, and preferably in advance of the viva.

2. PREPARING FOR SUBMISSION OF THE THESIS

2.1 General guidance

2.1.1 The Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes contains current rules on the form and content of the thesis and is updated annually. For information on preparation and formatting of theses, please see: https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/rpi/pgr/examination/formatting.

2.1.2 It is strongly recommended that the supervisor has read the final draft of the thesis and agrees with the candidate about the appropriate moment to submit the thesis. However, ultimately it is the candidate's responsibility to decide when to submit their thesis.

2.1.3 In the case of a first submission and a resubmission, **the candidate must submit one electronic copy of the thesis directly via a Google form to Research, Partnerships and Innovation**, following the procedures outlined at: https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/rpi/pgr/examination/submission. The candidate should inform their supervisor when they have done so, to ensure they can fulfil their responsibilities promptly.

2.1.4 **Under no circumstances** should a candidate attempt to send their thesis direct to the examiners prior to their viva examination. Candidates are also not permitted to send draft versions of their thesis to the examiners for comment prior to submission. The examiners are not permitted to read or examine any version of the thesis other than the version they will receive from Research, Partnerships and Innovation.

2.1.5 In addition to submitting their thesis to RPI, the candidate must also upload an electronic copy of the final thesis to Turnitin for a similarity check (this applies to both first submissions and resubmissions). Please note that uploading a thesis to Turnitin for a similarity check does not constitute formal thesis submission to the University. The thesis must also be submitted to Research, Partnerships and Innovation via the process described above.

2.1.6 Please be aware that thesis submission is final. Once a thesis has been submitted, it cannot normally be retracted. Candidates are responsible for ensuring that the thesis they submit is the correct version and is appropriate to be examined, i.e. it should be in a readable format and it should be complete.

2.2 Appointment of examiners

2.2.1 The supervisor should nominate examiners well in advance of the candidate's thesis submission to avoid subsequent delays in arranging the viva. Examiners must be formally appointed by the faculty before they can participate in the examination process.

2.2.2 Candidates should be advised of the names of their examiners at the earliest opportunity, in case they are aware of any potential conflict of interest that the supervisor might not know about.

2.2.3 The candidate should advise the supervisor and Research, Partnerships and Innovation if they have any previous or planned future connections with any of the nominated examiners, or any other reason to believe there is a conflict of interest. This includes, but is not limited to, current or former academic supervision or other forms of academic collaboration, pastoral relationships, family relationships, friendship, employment, or professional connections.

2.2.4 Once their nomination has been formally approved by the appropriate Faculty Officer, Research, Partnerships and Innovation will write to the examiners to confirm their appointment. Research, Partnerships and Innovation will also send them the necessary examiners' report forms and guidance notes, along with the thesis.

2.2.5 Research, Partnerships and Innovation can provide advice and information to candidates, supervisors and examiners alike on matters relating to the University's regulations and procedures for examining theses.

2.3 Academic misconduct

2.3.1 The University has high expectations of its postgraduate researchers, and it is essential that any work they produce for examination is their own work and is properly referenced. Candidates should ensure that they are familiar with and fully understand the guidance on academic integrity and academic misconduct before they submit their thesis for assessment (see: https://sheffield.ac.uk/study-skills/assessment/academic-integrity/academic-integrity).

2.3.2 The University is licensed to use Turnitin, which is a plagiarism detection software in common use in UK universities. All theses are uploaded to Turnitin to be checked for academic misconduct, e.g. plagiarism, before being formally sent out to the examiners.

2.3.3 Any candidate found to have engaged in academic misconduct in their thesis may have action taken against them under the University's Discipline Regulations and may be subject to a disciplinary penalty.

3. SUBMISSION

3.1 Thesis submission and despatch

3.1.1 Candidates must formally submit their thesis to Research, Partnerships and Innovation, regardless of whether it is their first submission or a resubmission.

3.1.2 **Candidates must submit one electronic copy of the thesis via Google form to Research, Partnerships and Innovation, following the procedure outlined at: https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/rpi/pgr/examination/submission**

3.1.3 Candidates must also upload their thesis file to Turnitin where it will be checked to ensure that unfair means has not been used. This should be done at the same time as submitting the thesis to Research, Partnerships and Innovation and the version uploaded to Turnitin must be identical to the submitted thesis. However, if the file size exceeds the limits of what Turnitin will accept, diagrams or pictures may need to be excluded. The Turnitin check will normally be undertaken by the internal examiner. If the internal examiner is unable to undertake this check in a reasonable timeframe, e.g. due to annual leave/sick leave, this may be delegated to another appropriate member of staff, e.g. PG Tutor, so as not to delay the examination process. **Candidates should note that uploading to Turnitin alone does not constitute formal thesis submission to the University.**

3.1.4 Once the school has confirmed to Research, Partnerships and Innovation that the Turnitin report is acceptable, Research, Partnerships and Innovation will normally despatch the thesis to the examiners within three working days (provided the examiners have been formally appointed).

3.1.5 Candidates should not, under any circumstances, send their examiners a copy of the thesis for examination. The thesis must always be sent to examiners by Research, Partnerships and Innovation, along with the relevant reports and guidance.

4. THE ORAL EXAMINATION (VIVA)

4.1 Arrangements for the viva

4.1.1 Examiners are required to test jointly, by oral examination, the candidate's knowledge of matters relevant to the subject of the thesis.

4.1.2 The candidate is not responsible for making any of the viva arrangements; these are the responsibility of the internal examiner or internal coordinator.

4.1.3 The viva should not be arranged until the thesis has been sent to the examiners by Research, Partnerships and Innovation, as this can lead to excessive pressure on both candidate and examiners if any delays arise, e.g. in checking the Turnitin originality report.

4.1.4 The viva should normally take place within 10 weeks of the examiners being sent the thesis by Research, Partnerships and Innovation. This is a guideline, not an absolute deadline. The appropriate faculty contact in Research, Partnerships and Innovation should be notified if, for any reason, this timetable cannot be met.

4.1.5 The viva arrangements, including the date, venue and format of the viva, and the details of all those participating in it, should be confirmed to all parties at least **two weeks** prior to the date of the examination. There should be no contact between the candidate and the examiners prior to the viva, other than in respect of viva arrangements.

4.1.6 Viva examinations can be held in a variety of formats, depending on the preference of the candidate and needs of all participants. Although face-to-face vivas will be the expectation in most cases, remote and hybrid vivas (where one participant is remote, and the others are face-to-face) are also acceptable. Where an examiner is appointed from outside the UK, a remote viva is the preferred option. If a remote or hybrid viva is taking place, the University's preferred video conferencing tool is Google Meet. Further guidance on the viva examination is available at https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/rpi/pgr/examination/viva.

4.1.7 Viva examinations will normally take place in Sheffield. If a venue outside of Sheffield is proposed, agreement must first be reached with the candidate, the supervisor and both examiners, prior to approval being sought via the PGR Support Team in RPI.

4.1.8 Where the viva is taking place face-to-face, the internal examiner/coordinator should ensure that the examination venue is appropriate for the purpose.

4.1.9 In the case of candidates with additional support requirements, advice and guidance can be obtained from the University's Disability and Dyslexia Support Service who will advise if any reasonable adjustments to the examination are required. This should be sought well in advance of the viva so that if any recommendations are made there is time for them to be implemented. Students can choose to share relevant information with their examiners, but need to give their consent (see 'Sharing information with external stakeholders').

4.1.10 The internal examiner/coordinator should ensure that the candidate's supervisor, or other appropriate member of staff, will be available immediately following the examination to offer advice and support to the candidate.

4.1.11 In cases where two external examiners have been appointed, an internal coordinator will also be appointed who will attend the viva to ensure that the University's procedures are followed. The coordinator will play no part in the actual examination process.

4.1.12 It is the candidate's responsibility to attend the viva on the specified date, and at the time and location, as arranged by the internal examiner/coordinator. Candidates must promptly advise the internal examiner, the supervisor, and the PGR Support Team in Research, Partnerships and Innovation if they are unable to attend the viva. Candidates must provide a valid reason for non-attendance at a pre-arranged viva examination supported by documentary evidence (e.g. a medical note in the case of illness).

4.1.13 Any unauthorised absence from the examination, or absence without a valid reason or evidence, is likely to result in the candidate failing the examination and being withdrawn from the University.

4.2 Conduct of the viva

4.2.1 The external examiner normally leads the viva, and both examiners will ask the candidate questions and follow up on the candidate's answers. The internal examiner, or internal coordinator, is responsible for ensuring that the University's procedures are correctly followed.

4.2.2 At the request of the candidate, the primary supervisor may exceptionally attend the viva, subject to the prior agreement of the candidate and examiners. If the primary supervisor does attend the examination, they must enter and leave the viva with the candidate and should not be present during any deliberations over the outcome of the examination.

4.2.3 It is recognised that the viva is a stressful and often lengthy assessment process. Therefore, the normal expectation is for a break to be scheduled at an appropriate point during the viva. If none of the parties want to take a break during the viva then that is acceptable; however, examiners should plan for a break to occur, and students should feel empowered to ask for one if this is not the case.

4.2.4 The examiners will inform the candidate of their recommendation at the end of the viva. Candidates should note that this is only a recommendation at this stage and is subject to approval by the relevant faculty once the examiners' reports have been submitted and considered.

4.2.5 Candidates may not claim expenses, e.g. for travel, incurred in relation to their oral examination.

4.3 Summary of viva outcomes

4.3.1 Examiners must clearly indicate their recommendation concerning the award (or non-award) of the degree. These are the permitted recommendations for doctoral degrees:

i. The degree is awarded without the need for any corrections to the thesis

ii. Pass with minor corrections. The degree will be awarded once specified minor corrections have been completed to the examiners' satisfaction. The candidate is allowed three months in which to make the required corrections. The three-month period starts from the date the candidate is sent the list of corrections by the examiners. Once the candidate has completed the corrections, they should send an electronic copy of the amended thesis to whichever examiner is responsible for checking that the corrections have been satisfactorily completed (this is normally the internal examiner's role).

iii. Pass with major corrections. The degree will be awarded once specified major corrections have been completed to the examiners' satisfaction. The candidate is allowed six months in which to make the required corrections. The six-month period starts from the date the candidate is sent the list of corrections by the examiners. Once the candidate has completed the corrections, they should send an electronic copy of the

amended thesis to whichever examiner is responsible for checking that the corrections have been satisfactorily completed (this is normally the internal examiner's role).

iv. The degree will not be awarded at present. The examiners would like the candidate to undergo a second viva, without the need for changes to their thesis, before making a final decision.

v. Resubmission of the thesis. The degree will not be awarded at present. The examiners request substantial changes to the thesis, and the candidate has one year to revise and resubmit the thesis for re-examination. The examiners may also require a second viva. The candidate will be formally notified by Research, Partnerships and Innovation of the need to resubmit, including whether this is with or without a further viva examination.

vi. Failure – award MPhil. The candidate has failed the doctoral degree, and the degree of MPhil will be awarded instead, subject to minor changes to the title page, cover and content.

vii. Resubmission for MPhil only. The doctoral degree is not awarded; however, the candidate is invited to resubmit for an MPhil. The examiners request substantial changes to the thesis, and the candidate has one year to complete these. The examiners may also require a second viva. The candidate will be formally notified by Research, Partnerships and Innovation of the need to resubmit, including whether this is with or without a further viva examination.

viii. Failure. The degree is not awarded; the candidate has failed.

4.3.2 Some higher degrees by research also incorporate a taught Master's element, e.g. EdD, EngD/PhD with an integrated Masters qualification. For these degrees the examiners may also recommend:

- The degree will not be awarded, but the candidate will receive the taught Master's degree for the programme.

4.3.3 For the degree of DClinPsy, the examiners can also recommend:

- The degree should not be awarded, but the candidate can submit an entirely new thesis for DClinPsy with a second viva. The candidate has one year to prepare this.

5. AFTER THE VIVA

5.1 Results of the viva

5.1.1 The examiners should return their completed report forms to Research, Partnerships and Innovation within two weeks of the date of the viva.

5.1.2 Research, Partnerships and Innovation will arrange for the reports to be considered by the appropriate Faculty Officer and will formally notify the candidate of the outcome of the

examination, once the reports have been approved. The exception to this is where candidates pass subject to the completion of minor or major corrections (see 5.2).

5.1.3 If a candidate has passed subject to completing minor or major corrections the examiners will provide the candidate with a list of the required corrections as soon as possible following the viva. The examiners will subsequently confirm to Research, Partnerships and Innovation when the corrections have been satisfactorily completed. Please note that Research, Partnerships and Innovation requires written confirmation of the completion of minor and major corrections from the examiners before the degree can be awarded.

5.2 Pass with minor or major corrections

5.2.1 Where minor corrections are required, the candidate has three months to complete these. For major corrections, the candidate has six months to complete the corrections. These timescales apply regardless of whether they are registered as full-time or part-time. This period starts from the date on which they receive details of the required corrections from their examiners. There is no need to wait for the viva outcome to be approved.

5.2.2 The examiners should ensure that the candidate receives a comprehensive list of the required corrections to the thesis as soon as possible after the viva. They should ensure the candidate has fully understood their comments and intention.

5.2.3 One of the examiners should be designated to approve the corrections once they have been completed. This is normally the responsibility of the internal examiner.

5.2.4 Research, Partnerships and Innovation does not formally inform the candidate of the outcome of their examination at this point or send them the required corrections; this is the responsibility of the examiners.

5.2.5 When the candidate has completed the requested corrections, they should send a copy of the amended thesis via email directly to the examiner who is going to check the corrections. This is **the only case** where it is acceptable for candidates to submit a thesis directly to the examiners.

5.2.6 It is **not** necessary for the candidate to re-upload the revised thesis to Turnitin if the candidate is only undertaking minor or major corrections.

5.2.7 Once the corrections have been checked and the designated examiner is satisfied that all the required changes have been satisfactorily completed, they should sign and date the separate minor/major corrections sheet and return it immediately to Research, Partnerships and Innovation. The corrections are not considered completed until this form is received; verbal approval is not sufficient.

5.2.8 As a general guideline, examiners should aim to complete their checking of the minor or major corrections within approximately four weeks of receiving the revised thesis.

5.2.9 Once the examiner has confirmed that all corrections have been completed, the candidate is almost ready to be awarded their degree. There are a few further requirements that must be completed before the degree can be awarded. Please refer to Section 6 for further details.

5.3 Resubmission and re-examination of a thesis

5.3.1 Where substantial changes to the thesis are required (i.e. a resubmission), the candidate has one year to resubmit their thesis, regardless of whether they are registered as full-time or part-time.

5.3.2 This year begins when the candidate is formally notified of this outcome by Research, Partnerships and Innovation.

5.3.3 The examiners should return their reports forms (along with the detailed comments on the required corrections) to Research, Partnerships and Innovation within two weeks of the date of the viva. If the examiners have annotated the thesis with their corrections, they should ensure that the thesis copy is returned to the candidate.

5.3.4 Once the recommendation for resubmission has been approved by the faculty, Research, Partnerships and Innovation will write to the candidate to inform them of the outcome and will send them a copy of the examiners' report, including the required corrections.

5.3.5 Where a candidate is required to resubmit their thesis this should be regarded as a formal re-examination. As such, there should be **no unauthorised contact** between the candidate and the examiners prior to the re-examination.

5.3.6 The candidate **must not** send a copy of the thesis to the examiners, either informally or for comment, prior to the formal resubmission. The candidate must formally resubmit their thesis to Research, Partnerships and Innovation following the same procedures that apply to first submissions, including uploading the thesis to Turnitin for a similarity check. The examiners will be sent a copy of the resubmitted thesis by Research, Partnerships and Innovation only.

5.3.7 Once the originality report has been checked on Turnitin by the internal examiner, Research, Partnerships and Innovation should be notified that it can be formally despatched to the examiners, along with the relevant re-examination report forms and examiners' guidance notes.

5.3.8 The original examiners will normally be required to undertake the re-examination.

5.3.9 Following receipt of the resubmitted thesis, the examiners should review it in the same way as they did the original thesis. If a further oral examination was recommended after the first examination, this should take place within 10 weeks of receipt of the thesis by the examiners.

5.3.10 If a further viva is not required, the examiners should aim to complete the re-examination of the revised thesis within approximately eight weeks of receiving it. This is a guideline, not an absolute deadline.

5.3.11 Once the examiners have reached their decision, the joint report form should be completed, signed, dated, and returned to Research, Partnerships and Innovation as soon as possible.

5.4 Resubmission outcomes

5.4.1 Examiners must clearly indicate their recommendation concerning the award (or non-award) of the degree. Here is a summary of the permitted recommendations for doctoral degrees following resubmission of a thesis:

i. The degree is awarded without the need for any corrections to the thesis

ii. The degree should be awarded once specified minor corrections have been completed

iii. The degree should be awarded once specified major corrections have been completed

iv. The degree of MPhil should be awarded instead, subject to minor changes to the title pages, cover and content.

iv. The degree should not be awarded; the candidate has failed.

5.4.2 Some higher degrees by research also incorporate a taught Master's element, e.g. EdD, EngD/PhD with Integrated Masters qualification. For these degrees the examiners may also recommend:

i. The degree should not be awarded, but the candidate should receive the taught Master's degree for the programme.

5.5 Resubmission for an MPhil

i. The degree is awarded without the need for any corrections to the thesis

ii. The degree should be awarded once specified minor corrections have been completed

iii. The degree should be awarded once specified major corrections have been completed

iv. The degree should not be awarded; the candidate has failed. Examiners must provide details of the reasoning behind this decision.

6. AWARD OF DEGREES

6.1 Approval of outcomes

6.1.1 Once the examiners have returned all their reports to Research, Partnerships and Innovation, the examiners' recommendation must be approved by the relevant faculty before the degree can be awarded. Research, Partnerships and Innovation arrange for faculty approval of examiners' reports and recommendations. Formal notification of the

award of the degree to the candidate can only be provided by Research, Partnerships and Innovation after it has been approved by the relevant faculty.

6.1.2 Awards will be withheld until the candidate has fulfilled all the requirements for the award of their degree. Prior to award, all candidates must ensure that they have done the following:

- Paid any outstanding tuition fees and tuition-related fees to the University;
- Deposited an electronic Library copy of the thesis, which must include an abstract, and provided a completed and signed Access to Thesis form;
- Completed an Evidencing Development Summary (formerly known as an ePortfolio) for the Doctoral Development Programme.

6.1.3 Following formal approval of the recommendation by the faculty, Research, Partnerships and Innovation will send the candidate an award letter and a copy of their examiners' reports via email.

6.2 Etheses and library copies

6.2.1 A successful candidate must upload a copy of their thesis to the White Rose eTheses Online (WREO) repository. This must be the final version of the thesis, which has been approved by the examiners following completion of any required corrections.

6.2.2 Candidates may choose to redact their ethesis submission to remove material that cannot be included, for example sensitive material or material for which copyright clearance has not been obtained. In these cases, the candidate must also provide a full, unredacted copy of the thesis, which will not be made publicly available. Please refer to 'Final Library copy' for further details.

6.2.3 Candidates may set embargoes on their ethesis. Embargoes must be clearly indicated on the Access to Thesis form, which must be submitted to Research, Partnerships and Innovation before the degree can be awarded. Candidates who upload their ethesis to WREO must also set any embargo options themselves as part of the upload process. This will not be done by Research, Partnerships and Innovation. See 'Embargoes' for further details.

6.3 Receiving the award

6.3.1 Award letters are provided by Research, Partnerships and Innovation once all requirements for the award have been met. The award letter and the examiners' report forms are emailed to the candidate.

6.3.2 Research, Partnerships and Innovation is not responsible for arranging for candidates to receive their degree certificate or attend a graduation ceremony. This is undertaken by the Corporate Events Team, who will contact candidates with details of their next available graduation ceremony, and information on obtaining the degree certificate by post ('in absentia'). For further information, please see: https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/graduation