

## Guide to the Examination of Research Degrees (MPhil, PhD)

### Introduction

These are brief guidelines on the examination process for research degrees. These guidelines are intended to provide helpful information for research students, their supervisors, and examiners. Staff in the Graduate School will be happy to assist if more detailed advice is needed.

These guidelines reflect the policies and procedures relating to research degree examinations, but it may be useful to refer also to the Postgraduate Research Assessment Regulations in the Academic Regulations and Procedures. The more relevant sections of these regulations are included in this guidance and in the Appendices.

### The Examination Process

All research students submit a thesis for examination (see Appendix 2 on the form, submission and deposit of theses). Examiners are appointed specifically according to the student's area of study to assess the student's thesis. As well as the assessment of the work itself, all students undergo an oral examination. It is based on the examination of both the thesis and the student that the outcome of the full examination is determined.

### Criteria for the award of MPhil

The degree shall be awarded on the examination of a thesis embodying the results of the candidate's research, and on an oral examination. The work for the degree shall consist mainly of research and directed study; the candidate may in addition be required to undertake coursework, and the award of the degree may be conditional on satisfactory performance in this coursework.

A successful candidate for the degree of MPhil shall display a convincing grasp of the techniques of research appropriate to the field of study on a scale, which can be completed during two years, or at most three years, of full-time study or equivalent. The thesis embodying the results of the research shall demonstrate evidence of originality, a systematic understanding of knowledge, a critical awareness of current problems and/or new insights at the forefront of their academic discipline, field of study or area of professional practice, and shall achieve a high standard of competence in argument and presentation. The thesis shall comply with the requirements for the form, submission and deposit of theses.

MPhil degrees are awarded to students who have demonstrated:

- (a) a systematic understanding of knowledge, and a critical awareness of current problems and/or new insights, much of which is at, or informed by, the forefront of their academic discipline, field of study or area of professional practice
- (b) a comprehensive understanding of techniques applicable to their own research or advanced scholarship
- (c) originality in the application of knowledge, together with a practical understanding of how established techniques of research and enquiry are used to create and interpret knowledge in the discipline
- (d) conceptual understanding that enables the student to evaluate:
  - a. critically current research and advanced scholarship in the discipline
  - b. methodologies and develop critiques of them and, where appropriate, to propose new hypotheses.

### Criteria for the award of PhD

The degree shall be awarded on the examination of a thesis embodying the results of a candidate's research, and on an oral examination (viva). The nature of the student's research programme should be on a scale, which should be completed during three years, or at most four years, of full-time study or equivalent.

## Guide to the Examination of Research Degrees (MPhil, PhD)

A successful candidate for the degree of PhD shall show convincing evidence of the capacity to pursue scholarly research or scholarship in his or her field of study on a scale, which should be completed during three years of full-time research. The results of this research shall then be embodied in a thesis, which makes an original contribution to knowledge, which extends the forefront of a discipline. The completed thesis must contain material of a standard appropriate for scholarly publication. The thesis shall comply with the requirements for the form, submission and deposit of theses.

Doctoral degrees are awarded to students who have demonstrated:

- (a) the creation and interpretation of new knowledge, through original research or other advanced scholarship, of a quality to satisfy peer review, extend the forefront of the discipline, and merit publication
- (b) a systematic acquisition and understanding of a substantial body of knowledge that is at the forefront of an academic discipline or area of professional practice
- (c) the general ability to conceptualise, design and implement a project for the generation of new knowledge, applications or understanding at the forefront of the discipline, and to adjust the project design in the light of unforeseen problems
- (d) a detailed understanding of applicable techniques for research and advanced academic enquiry.

### Purpose of the Oral/Viva Voce examination

The oral examination, or viva voce (“by live voice” examination) is a key part of the examination process and allows the examiners to explore with the student areas of interest, controversy, weakness, obscurity, etc., in order that they may then make an appropriate recommendation to the university. All research students must have a viva, regardless of the examiners’ views on the quality of the thesis. In some cases, the viva may do no more than confirm a favourable opinion already formed from the thesis. In other cases, it will provide the candidate with the opportunity to compensate for weaknesses in the thesis or dispel examiners’ reservations; in a minority of cases it may fail to do this and instead confirm the examiners’ view that a recommendation other than approval should be made. It is, therefore, an important occasion for which students should be as well prepared as possible. Discussion may focus very specifically on sections of the thesis, research methodology, etc., or may expand to look more generally at the field and the place of the thesis’s contribution within it.

In summary, the viva voce examination allows:

- the student to defend his/her research and thesis, expanding or clarifying sections, providing more detailed background information, etc.;
- the examiners to obtain further clarification on the work undertaken and the content of the thesis;
- the examiners the opportunity to assure themselves that the thesis and its underlying research are the work of the student himself/herself.

### The Examiners

Most students have two examiners. There should always be at least one internal examiner - usually but not always from the same department as the student - and one external examiner. If a student has had a connection with the department or university beyond that of being a research student, i.e. as a member of staff or a research assistant, then a second external examiner is required. At least one of the examiners, if not both, must have wide experience in the examination process for research degrees.

## Guide to the Examination of Research Degrees (MPhil, PhD)

Examiners are nominated by the relevant supervisor, but must be approved by the body with delegated authority from Academic Board. The member of staff responsible for identifying the examiners should discuss the appointment with the student, but the student does not have the right to a choice or veto. There is a standard form to be completed and submitted to the Graduate School. This process can take time. It is therefore suggested that recommendations for the appointment of examiners should be made at least three months before the student is expected to submit his/her thesis for examination so that once the examiners are approved the thesis may be sent immediately.

### Internal Examiners

The internal examiner should normally be a member of staff from either the same department or an area cognate to the student's field of research. It is possible that the internal examiner will not be an expert in the precise field of research but will be acquainted with the broad area within which it falls. In addition, the internal examiner should normally hold a degree at least equivalent to that for which the student is being examined, and should be experienced in research, including having published. The student's supervisor should not act as the internal examiner.

### External Examiners

The external examiner will normally be an experienced member of another university qualified (i) to assess the thesis within its own field and (ii) to compare its quality with work of higher degree standard at other British universities.

The external examiner(s) should normally:

- be competent in the area of work being examined
- be experienced in research, including having published
- be experienced in the examination of research students.

The external examiner will normally be a senior academic from another institution, but from time to time it may be appropriate to appoint an examiner from outside the university sector. In such cases, the examiner must have at least an understanding of the examination process, and if s/he has not previously examined a research student, then the internal examiner must be widely experienced as an examiner.

External Examiners should NOT:

- i. have any previous specific contact with the student
- ii. be a former member of Cumbria's staff within the past 5 years
- iii. have examined more than four University of Cumbria research students within the last 5 years
- iv. be a close relative or closely connected with any other party to the examination.

### Preparing for the Viva

#### The Department

The viva normally should take place within three months of the submission of the thesis to the Graduate School (although it may sometimes take longer than this due to the examiners' other commitments). This allows adequate time for the examiners to read the thesis and write the independent preliminary report. It is the responsibility of the Graduate School to liaise with the external examiner in order to organise the viva.

Although the student is usually consulted about the timing of the viva, it is the student's responsibility to be available at the arranged time. The student should be given plenty of notice of the place, date and time of the viva. Given how difficult it can be to find a time suitable for all

## Guide to the Examination of Research Degrees (MPhil, PhD)

participants, this should be organised as soon as possible after examiners have been appointed. Vivas should normally be held at University of Cumbria campuses. Exceptions to this, including the use of video conferencing, will need the approval of the body with delegated authority from Academic Board.

### The Student

The student should thoroughly review the thesis plus background research, experiments, analyses, etc. If possible and available, the student should first take part in a 'mock examination' organised by the supervisor in order to familiarise him or herself with the process and likely content. Any queries the student has regarding the viva should be directed to his/her supervisor; there should be no contact between the student and the examiners.

### The Supervisor

The supervisor should assist the student in preparing for the viva, including, if possible, holding a mock viva. The supervisor is also responsible for acting as a liaison between the examiners and the student.

### The Examiners

Examiners need to read the thesis and complete an initial independent report on it, report forms are provided by the Graduate School. The initial report should be sent to the Graduate School at least one week before the viva. After the viva, the viva voce report form should be completed with details of the viva and the recommended outcome and sent to the Graduate School as soon as possible afterwards (normally within five working days of the viva).

### The Graduate School

The Graduate School is responsible for sending out copies of the thesis to the examiners, along with the report forms, guidelines, and fees and expenses claim forms. When completed, report and expenses claim forms should be sent back directly to the Graduate School.

### The Viva

Attending the viva will be the student, the internal and external examiners and possibly, with the agreement of the student, the supervisor (who may be present but may not take an active part in the examination). In addition, all vivas either have an independent chair or are recorded, as laid down in the *Examining Research Degrees Good Practice Guide*.

Information on the conduct of the viva is given in Appendix 1, the Framework for the Research Degree Viva. In addition, the following comments can be made:

- i. The viva should begin punctually at the time arranged. If for an unforeseen reason (i.e. transport delays) the start of the examination must be delayed, then the student must be kept informed.
- ii. When an independent Chair has not been nominated, the internal examiner acts as the convenor of the examination, introducing the external examiner to the student and explaining the procedures of the examination.
- iii. Students should be told at the beginning of their viva that no information about outcomes will be provided until the end of the examination (viva), and that no conclusions should be drawn from this.
- iv. The examiners should then give the student a general idea of what to expect regarding areas to be covered, issues to be resolved, etc.
- v. The main part of the examination will then take place, with questions and comments coming from both examiners (although not always in equal proportion). These can cover any aspect of the thesis and research and the student should be prepared for it to be a wide-ranging,

## Guide to the Examination of Research Degrees (MPhil, PhD)

insistent, persistent, probing and forceful interrogation. Having said that, many vivas, particularly those where a positive outcome is in little or no doubt, are conducted in a friendly and helpful spirit. Students may occasionally feel under attack, but should bear in mind that this is, after all, a defense of a thesis. The examination should be conducted throughout with appropriate rigour, but also with courtesy.

- vi. At the end of the viva, the student should be asked to withdraw for a few minutes while the examiners agree on the outcome, then be invited back to be informed of their decision. Where additional work is required (and most students are required to undertake at least some corrections), examiners must make it clear (i) precisely what their recommendation is and why they are making it, and (ii) the nature and scale of work (this can vary from mere textual corrections to substantial revision and rewriting), and time permitted. It is the responsibility of the internal examiner to provide as soon as possible, and within ten working days, a more detailed written summary of work to be undertaken following the viva. Either the summary should be given to the student at the viva, or to the supervisor following the viva (a copy should be sent to the Graduate School for its records).
- vii. If further work is required, the supervisor should act as the link between the examiners and the student. There should be no direct contact between the student and the examiners unless a second viva is held (which sometimes happens if the student needs to resubmit the thesis).
- viii. Normally the examiners should return their copies of the thesis either directly to the student at the end of the viva, or as soon as convenient.
- ix. In certain circumstances, the viva may be undertaken via video-conferencing. Appendix 4 provides detailed information on this.

### Outcomes of the Examination Process

Each examiner formally makes his or her recommendation by submitting his/her report to the Graduate School. Once the Head of the Graduate School on behalf of Academic Board has approved a recommendation, then student administration will write formally to the student to notify them of the outcome, if there are no outstanding debts.

### For the degree of MPhil:

The examiners shall make one of the following recommendations:

- (a) that the degree of MPhil be awarded forthwith as pass or distinction
- (b) that the degree of MPhil be awarded subject to corrections being made within three months (corrections could include typographical errors, occasional stylistic or grammatical flaws, corrections to references etc.) verified by either the internal examiner only, external examiner only or, all examiners;
- (c) that the degree of MPhil shall be awarded subject to corrections being made within six months (corrections may include minor deficiencies requiring some textual revision);
- (d) that the degree of MPhil should not be awarded but that the candidate should be invited to revise the thesis and resubmit it for the degree of MPhil;
- (e) that the degree of MPhil should not be awarded.

The examiners, for an outstanding and memorable thesis and defence, may award the MPhil with Distinction. The work should be well researched and substantially original; bearing in mind that originality has many dimensions. The thesis and defence will be ambitious in scope, show depth of research and sophistication of conceptual understanding, and be of high quality in its argument.

Students given the opportunity to make corrections or amendments shall normally be given only one opportunity to make the changes required as specified by the examiners.

**Guide to the Examination of Research Degrees (MPhil, PhD)****For the degree of PhD:**

The examiners shall make one of the following recommendations:

- (a) that the degree of PhD be awarded immediately: A pass with no or very minor corrections, i.e. typographical or presentational corrections only. The candidate is to make very minor corrections, if required, within one month prior to submission of the final version of the thesis and there is no requirement for these to be approved by the internal or the external examiner. It should normally take a candidate less than 1 month to make this level of corrections, depending on personal circumstances.
- (b) that the degree of PhD be awarded subject to *minor* corrections being made within three months. 'Minor corrections' refers to e.g. a number of significant stylistic errors such as needing to clarify or rephrase points, or add/edit blocks of text. There will be no requirement to conduct further research or to undertake substantial further work. The internal examiner must approve the corrections. A second oral examination is not required. It should normally take a candidate fewer than 3 months to make this level of corrections, depending on personal circumstances.
- (c) that the degree of PhD be awarded subject to *major* corrections being made within six months: There is a requirement for significant further work, but there is not an automatic requirement for a second oral examination. Changes may include, but are not limited to: the addition of substantial new material; rewriting and editing sections of the thesis; re-analysis of existing data. Either the internal examiner or the internal and the external examiner, as agreed by the examiners must approve the corrections. The examiners will determine if a second oral examination is required. It should normally take a candidate between 3 and 6 months to make this level of amendments, depending on personal circumstances.
- (d) that the degree of PhD should not be awarded but the candidate should be permitted to revise and resubmit the thesis within twelve months for the degree of PhD: The requirements for the degree of PhD have not been met. Changes may include, but are not limited to: extensive rewriting and editing sections of, or the whole of, the thesis; carrying out further research and/or experimental work. Both the internal and the external examiner must approve the revisions. The examiners will determine if a second oral examination is required. It should normally take a candidate between 6 and 12 months to make this level of amendments, depending on personal circumstances.
- (e) that the degree of MPhil be awarded immediately: The requirements for the degree of PhD have *not* been met but the requirements for the MPhil have been met, with no or *very* minor corrections, i.e. typographical or presentational corrections only. The candidate is to make very minor corrections, if required, within one month prior to submission of the final version of the thesis and there is no requirement for these to be approved by the internal or the external examiner. It should normally take a candidate less than 1 month to make this level of corrections, depending on personal circumstances.
- (f) that the degree of MPhil be awarded subject to minor corrections being made within three months: The requirements for the degree of PhD have not been met but the requirements for the MPhil have been met with minor corrections, e.g. a number of significant stylistic errors such as needing to clarify or rephrase points, or add/edit blocks of text. There will be no requirement to conduct further research or to undertake substantial further work. The internal examiner must approve the corrections. A second oral examination is not required. It should normally take a candidate fewer than 3 months to make this level of corrections, depending on personal circumstances.
- (g) that the candidate be permitted to revise and resubmit the thesis within twelve months for the degree of MPhil: The requirements for the degree of PhD have *not* been met but the candidate is permitted to submit a revised thesis for the lower award. Changes may include, but are not limited to: extensive editorial corrections and revisions; rewriting a part, parts, or the whole of the thesis; carrying out further research or experimental work. Both the internal and the external examiner must approve the revisions. The examiners will determine if a second oral

## Guide to the Examination of Research Degrees (MPhil, PhD)

examination is required. It should normally take a candidate between 6 and 12 months to make this level of corrections, depending on personal circumstances

Students given the opportunity to make corrections or amendments shall normally be given only one opportunity to make the changes required as specified by the examiners.

### **If further work is required on the Thesis**

Frequently students are expected to carry out some further work on their thesis, either corrections, amendments, or sometimes a re-submission if there is a significant amount of work required.

### **The Student**

The student will be given information in writing from the examiners on what work is needed. The level of detail will vary according to the type of work necessary (i.e. it could be anything from a list of typing errors to a paragraph describing generally how to re-shape the thesis). The student can expect to receive some guidance from his/her supervisor, particularly in interpreting the examiners' comments. If corrections are required, the student must complete them within three months or six months, if more substantive corrections are required, of receiving details of the work to be done.

The student should submit the revised copy of his/her thesis to the Graduate School to pass on to the examiner(s) for confirmation that the changes have been made as required.

If the examiners recommended a resubmission, then the student has up to twelve months in which to resubmit his/her thesis, and is entitled to continued supervision and some access to facilities. When the thesis is ready for resubmission, soft bound copies must be submitted to Graduate School who will send out the thesis to the examiners. Normally the same examiners are used, but from time to time a new examiner(s) may need to be appointed. The student should be prepared for a second viva, although one is not always held.

### **The Department/Supervisor**

Contact between the student and the examiners should be avoided and the supervisor should act as the intermediary and if additional work is required the examiners should provide to the Graduate School written guidance on the work to be carried out. The supervisor is expected to provide advice and support while the student carries out the changes required and the department should ensure that the student has access to the facilities needed to undertake the specified work. If corrections are required, the Graduate School will send a form for confirming that the student has made the required changes to the examiner(s) for completion along with the revised thesis.

If the student has corrections to make, when the changes have been made the student should hand in the thesis to the Graduate School in order for it to be given to the examiner(s) for approval. If the student has to resubmit the thesis, it must be submitted to the Graduate School.

### **The Examiners**

If corrections are required, the examiners should decide whether they each need to review the revisions. Often it is decided that only the internal examiner need check the changes to ensure they have been carried out satisfactorily.

Once the examiner(s) receives the corrected thesis, the changes should be checked carefully and, if satisfactory, the examiner(s) should confirm to the Graduate School that the corrections have been made as required. Informally the examiner(s) should let the supervisor know when the changes have been confirmed. When checking corrections, the examiner(s) should respond within one month of receiving the revised thesis; when checking more substantive corrections, the examiner(s) should respond within two months.

## Guide to the Examination of Research Degrees (MPhil, PhD)

If the examiners recommend that the student needs to resubmit his/her thesis, then they will be expected to undertake the re-examination of the thesis when the resubmitted version is ready. A new report on the thesis must be completed. It is up to the examiners to determine whether a second oral examination is necessary. In general, it is advised that a second viva should be held unless the resubmitted thesis needs no further work (the degree could be recommended forthwith). If a second viva is held, then a report on that examination must also be completed.

After examining the re-submitted thesis (and holding a viva if they wish), examiners have the following options:

### Theses resubmitted for MPhil

After examination of the resubmitted thesis the examiners shall recommend one of the following recommendations:

- (a) that the degree of MPhil be awarded forthwith
- (b) that the degree of MPhil be awarded subject to corrections being made within one month of notification of the decision (corrections could include typographical errors, occasional stylistic or grammatical flaws, corrections to references etc.) verified by either the internal examiner only, external examiner only or, all examiners;
- (c) that the degree of MPhil should not be awarded.

### Theses resubmitted for PhD

After examination of the resubmitted thesis, the examiners shall make one of the following recommendations:

- (a) that the degree of PhD be awarded forthwith;
- (b) that the degree of PhD be awarded subject to corrections being made within one month of notification of the decision (corrections could include typographical errors, occasional stylistic or grammatical flaws, corrections to references etc.) verified by either the internal examiner only or all examiners;
- (c) that the thesis be judged to be already of a standard that would justify the award of the MPhil degree forthwith;
- (d) that the thesis may be resubmitted for a second time for the degree of MPhil within six months of the date of formal notification of the decision); or
- (e) that no award be made.

### The Graduate School

The Graduate School will receive the report forms from the examiners with their recommendations. If corrections, the Graduate School will contact the examiners seeking confirmation that the required changes have been completed satisfactorily.

### Awarding the Degree

The examiners' recommendations and reports are reviewed by the body with delegated authority from Academic Board (usually Head of the Graduate School), who gives formal approval regarding the award of the degree. Once the examiners have sent in all required forms and confirmed to the Graduate School that the degree should be awarded, the student must arrange for two copies of the final version of the thesis to be deposited for hard binding. Regulations regarding the binding of the copies are given in Appendix 2.

No award will be made until the Student Academic Administration Service (SAAS) has received confirmation that the thesis has been deposited for hard binding. Students who are away from Cumbria will need to post the bound copies of the thesis to the Graduate School.

## **Guide to the Examination of Research Degrees (MPhil, PhD)**

The Student Academic Administration Service then writes to the student notifying him/her of the outcome, and if the degree has been awarded, provides initial details about the time and location of the degree ceremony. The Student Academic Administration Service will issue the degree certificate as soon as the degree award is approved.

## Guide to the Examination of Research Degrees (MPhil, PhD)

### Appendix 1: Framework for the research degree viva

The guidance set out below, and approved by Academic Board, is designed to best protect the interests of all participants in the process, for any research degree examination leading to a Cumbria award (even when a viva voce is held away from Cumbria).

#### 1. Definition of the viva voce

- 1.1. A viva voce is an oral examination of a research degree thesis, and of the student who wrote it, which is normally conducted in person, at a University of Cumbria campus, by an internal and an external examiner.
- 1.2. The first stage of the examination is the review of the student's thesis. The student submits his/her thesis directly to the Graduate School. The Graduate School is responsible for sending a copy to each examiner. The examiners independently read the thesis and write a Pre-Viva Voce report on it, with comments about its contribution to the field, its strengths and weaknesses, and possibly a range of points, which they will raise at the viva voce.

#### 2. Status of the viva voce

- 2.1. The viva voce is a compulsory part of all research degree examinations (M.Phil. and Ph.D.), however excellent or poor the thesis may be. The student always has the right to defend his/her work to the examiners.
- 2.2. It is not possible under current regulations for a student to fail a research degree outright without undertaking a viva voce.

#### 3. Role of each participant in the viva voce

- 3.1. The external examiner(s): the role of the external examiner(s) (someone not connected with the University) is to assess the quality of the submission and help to uphold the quality of the degree in the UK.
- 3.2. In certain circumstances, there may be a third examiner, external to the University, involved to ensure impartiality. This would happen if:
  - (a) the student is a member of staff, or holds a temporary teaching or research contract at the University;
  - (b) the student is being examined for a Ph.D. by Published Work;
  - (c) the student's supervisor is acting also as the internal examiner.
- 3.3. The internal examiner(s): the role of the internal examiner(s) is to assess the quality of the submission and help to uphold the quality of a Cumbria award. The role is similar to that of the external examiner(s), and it has equal status and standing. It is not the role of the internal examiner to protect the student, to be the student's friend, and/or to defend the supervisor, department or institution against criticism from the external examiner(s), nor to act as chair in the viva voce (unless the department decides not to have an independent chair). The internal examiner must be and be seen to be independent; and thus wherever practicable he/she should not have played any significant role in either the supervision of the student or the assessment of the student during his/her studies (e.g. annual progress review, confirmation panel).
- 3.4. The independent chair: the role of the independent chair is to be an observer and manager of the meeting, and to ensure that procedures are followed properly. The chair does not need to be a subject specialist, does not need to have read the thesis, and is not directly involved in examining it. If a department decides not to have an independent chair, it must arrange for an audio record of the viva voce to be made and retained. If there is no independent chair, the internal examiner will normally be expected to chair the viva voce. There should always be an independent chair where the internal and/or external examiners are inexperienced (usually defined as having participated in less than two vivas at the appropriate level).
- 3.5. The student: the role of the student is to discuss, explain and defend his/her work as represented in the thesis being examined, to be open to critical appraisal by the examiners, and

## Guide to the Examination of Research Degrees (MPhil, PhD)

to be prepared and willing to engage in a dialogue with the examiners about the substance and field of enquiry of the thesis.

- 3.6. The supervisor, (whether the supervisor is present throughout the viva voce, or attends at the end when the examiners report to the student their decision about the outcome of the examination), their role is to be a silent witness to the proceedings. To be able to provide feedback to and advise the student after the viva voce is completed.

### 4. Student preparation for the viva voce

- 4.1. All students should be allowed and encouraged to acquire relevant experience in defending the thesis, in advance of the viva voce, including:
  - (a) by robust interrogation of their work and progress during each annual appraisal and at the upgrade panel;
- 4.2. by being given a mock viva voce.
- 4.3. It would be inappropriate for the chair and/or internal examiner(s) to be directly involved in the student's training for the viva voce.

### 5. Membership of viva voce panel

#### 5.1 Supervisor

- (a) The student's supervisor(s) may attend the viva voce with the approval of the student.
- (b) If not present throughout the viva voce, the supervisor(s) should normally be invited to attend the final stage of the viva voce when the examiners report their decision to the student, unless the student advises the chair, before the viva voce, that he/she would prefer the supervisor not to attend.
- (c) If present, the supervisor(s) must remain silent and impassive.

#### 5.2 Independent chair

- (a) There should normally be an independent chair present throughout the viva voce. The chair should normally be a member of academic staff (or an emeritus member), who is neither an examiner nor a supervisor of the student being examined.
- (b) The relevant head of department or his /her nominee should select the independent chair.
- (c) The chair must be familiar with this guidance, and with the Regulations for Postgraduate Research Degrees of the University.
- (d) The chair would normally be expected to have experience of conducting at least three research degree vivas as an examiner.
- (e) No member of staff should normally be expected to serve as independent chair on more than three per year.

### 6. Chair and/or audio record

- 6.1. Departments have discretion to decide, on a case-by-case basis, whether to have an independent chair (see clause 5.2) and/or to keep an audio record (see clause 7.1) of the viva voce proceedings. They must adopt at least one of the two.
- 6.2. An independent chair and an audio record do not serve the same purpose, so departments need to give careful thought about which one(s) they will adopt in each case.
- 6.3. The decisions about the independent chair and the audio record must be notified to the Graduate School at the time of appointment of the internal and external examiners.

### 7. Record keeping

- 7.1. Departments have discretion not to make an audio record of a particular viva voce, provided they appoint an independent chair (see clause 6.1).
- 7.2. If the department decides that it is appropriate to record a viva voce on audio tape or minidisk, the person taking the chair at the viva voce should ensure that the audio record is made and lodged with the Graduate School.
- 7.3. Nothing will be done with the audio record (no one will listen to it) unless it is to be used as evidence in the event of an appeal/complaint.
- 7.4. The audio record should normally be kept in the Graduate School for no longer than twelve months after the viva voce, unless the student has made an appeal/complaint against the

## Guide to the Examination of Research Degrees (MPhil, PhD)

decision of the examiners (in which case the audio record should be kept until the end of the appeal/complaint process).

### 8. Timing and arrangements

- 8.1. The maximum period of time between submission of thesis by student and the date of the viva voce examination should normally be three months.
- 8.2. The Graduate School administrator is responsible for making arrangements for the viva voce (including day, time, location and name of the independent chair if there is one), and for communicating this information to the examiners, the student, the chair and the supervisor(s).
- 8.3. Appropriate arrangements should be made available for disabled students, on the same basis as for other forms of University assessments, in order to provide an equal opportunity to defend the thesis.
- 8.4. The examiners, chair and student should be given as much notice as possible about the day and time of the viva voce, and this should normally be not less than two weeks prior to the appointed date.
- 8.5. The chair is responsible for making sure that seating arrangements in the viva voce room are appropriate for dialogue between the participants.
- 8.6. Video-conferencing of a viva voce examination, with either the candidate or an examiner at a remote location, is permissible as long as the student is not disadvantaged by its use, and as long as all parties consent to it. The University retains the right to refuse a request to use video-conferencing; such a refusal will not constitute grounds for appeal.
- 8.7. The internal examiner should collate written guidance from all the examiners on required changes to the thesis to be undertaken within a reasonable period of time after the viva voce. For minor corrections (3 months), the information should normally be collated within two weeks; for major revisions (6 or 12 months) within one month.
- 8.8. The internal examiner should forward the written guidance from the examiners to the student, and send a copy to the Graduate School, without delay.
- 8.9. The period of minor corrections (3 months) or major revisions (6 or 12 months) should commence on the day written guidance from examiners on required changes is sent to the student (and to the Graduate School) by the internal examiner.

### 9. Examiners' written report

- 9.1. Examiners are required to provide written reports on the thesis before the viva voce examination, to establish that they have read the thesis before the viva voce, and to record their initial judgements formed on the basis of reading the thesis.
- 9.2. Examiners are required to write separate such reports independently of each other, and send them to the Graduate School, before they exchange views and compare notes with the other examiners.
- 9.3. Examiners should be given the opportunity (but not be required) in such reports to give a provisional decision about the outcome of the examination.
- 9.4. The reports should only be seen before the viva voce by administrative staff who have no vested interest in the outcome of the examination.
- 9.5. Under Data Protection legislation, the student has no right of access to the reports before the examination process is complete.

### 10. The purpose of the viva voce examination

- 10.1. The viva voce is an opportunity for the student to defend the thesis.
- 10.2. It is not a purpose of the viva voce to test the student's command of spoken English in what is often a stressful situation. This is particularly important for students whose first language is not English, and for some disabled students.
- 10.3. The viva voce should normally include the assessment of the student's ability to:
  - (a) locate his/her research in the broader context;
  - (b) display detailed knowledge of the thesis;
  - (c) authenticate the work (i.e. to prove that it is the student's own work).

## Guide to the Examination of Research Degrees (MPhil, PhD)

- 10.4. Criterion (a) should be explicitly commented on in the examiners' reports.
- 10.5. Criteria (a) to (c) should be explicitly evaluated during the viva voce.
- 10.6. It is appropriate in the viva voce to ask questions about the originality of the thesis, and about the contribution the thesis makes to knowledge.
- 10.7. The student should also be able to defend the methodology and conclusions of the thesis, and display awareness of the limitations of the thesis, in the viva voce.
- 10.8. For the viva voce to be regarded as successful, the student should satisfy the examiners that s/he is worthy of the research degree, which ultimately is a matter of academic judgement by the examiners.

### 11. Conduct of the viva voce

- 11.1. Existing University Academic Regulations cover procedures for dealing with disagreements between examiners.
- 11.2. Examiners should not normally be able to fail or refer a thesis on grounds that are not considered with the student in the viva voce. The decision should be based on what is discussed in the viva voce.
- 11.3. An audio record is helpful in reconstructing what was discussed in the viva voce, and how it was discussed.
- 11.4. The viva voce should give the student an opportunity to defend anything the examiners regard as problematic. It will normally be expected to touch upon the issues that the examiners regard as important in reaching their decision about the award of the degree in question.
- 11.5. At the beginning of the viva voce, the student should be told by the chair, that no information about outcomes will be provided until the end of the viva voce examination, and that no conclusions should be drawn from this. This is because to indicate or hint at outcomes could:
  - (a) partly negate the value of the viva in the assessment process;
  - (b) compromise the ability of the examiners to change their mind during the course of the viva voce;
  - (c) have a significant impact on how the student feels and responds to questioning during the viva voce.
- 11.6. A typical viva voce should normally last for not less than one hour and not more than four hours, although it is recognised that practice varies between disciplines.
- 11.7. Questions during the viva voce should be fair and appropriate. Fair play should be maintained, and proper procedures should be followed.
- 11.8. If the chair and examiners anticipate that a viva voce is likely to last more than about two hours, the chair should give an opportunity for a break after two hours, provided that to do so does not disadvantage the student.
- 11.9. The chair shall have final decision on when the viva voce should finish, taking into account the views of the examiners, and the need to uphold fair play and to give the student an opportunity to defend his/her work.

### 12. Student role in the viva voce

- 12.1. Examiners are expected to be open-minded in their probing of the student's work, and to approach the task in a spirit of academic integrity.
- 12.2. The chair should ensure that the student is given the opportunity to present a brief verbal summary of their work (15 minutes maximum), towards the start of the viva voce, *if* they wish to do so.
- 12.3. The chair should ensure that the student is given an appropriate right of reply to points raised by the examiners, during and at the end of the viva voce.
- 12.4. If the student feels during the course of the viva voce that the questions are not fair or appropriate, that they are being denied the right of reply, or that proper procedures are not being followed, s/he should be able to call for a break, and talk privately with the chair.

## Guide to the Examination of Research Degrees (MPhil, PhD)

- 12.5. If the chair grants such a time out during the viva voce, the conversation between student and chair should not be overheard by the examiners, but it should be recorded on the audio tape or mini-disk if the viva voce is recorded.

### 13. Outcome of the viva voce

- 13.1. Towards the end of the viva voce, the student (and supervisor(s) if present) should be asked to leave the room while the examiners decide what outcome they think appropriate (see section 18).
- 13.2. The chair should remain present throughout the viva voce.
- 13.3. When the examiners have reached their decision, the student (normally accompanied by the supervisor(s)) should then be invited back into the room, to be told (normally by the external examiner) what the examiners will be recommending to the University.
- 13.4. The outcome given at the end of the viva voce is a recommendation, subject to approval by the body with delegated authority from the Committee of Academic Board.

### 14. Post-Viva Voce Reports

- 14.1. All examiners are required to submit a further written report after the viva voce, which includes their judgement of the quality of the thesis and the student's performance in the viva voce, and contains their recommendation about the award of the degree:
- examiners can submit a joint report if they agree on the outcome, and if producing a joint report is practical under the circumstances;
  - examiners must submit separate reports if they disagree on the outcome.
- 14.2. Under General Data Protection legislation, students have a right of access to their post-viva voce report after Academic Board approval of the examiners' recommendation is confirmed and the examination (including any revisions) has been completed.
- 14.3. Any examiner may indicate that part (to be highlighted explicitly) or all of his/her report should be disclosed to the student before the examiners' recommendations are approved by the Academic Board, if the examiner believes this would help the student to make appropriate corrections or revisions.
- 14.4. The internal examiner is responsible for making sure that the student is made fully aware of the examiners' expectations in respect of which corrections or revisions are felt necessary (see 8.7).

### 15. Second Viva Voce

- 15.1. The examiners can require a student to attend a second viva voce as part of the examination of a resubmitted thesis, but not for minor corrections.

### 16. Student's right of appeal

- 16.1. A student has no right of appeal against the academic judgement of the examiners. A student may appeal, however, against the outcome of the examination under the procedures for Academic Appeals as defined in the document on Academic Appeals.
- 16.2. All students of the University have the right to make a complaint under the Student Charter.

### 17. Publication of guidelines

- 17.1. These guidelines and criteria will be:
- given to each research degree student when submitting the thesis;
  - given to the examiners on appointment, to the chair on designation, and to the supervisor on submission of the thesis.

## Guide to the Examination of Research Degrees (MPhil, PhD)

### Appendix 2: The form, submission and deposit of theses

#### Submission and deposit: Doctoral theses

1. Candidates shall submit to the Graduate School:
  - (a) Copies of the thesis (one per examiner) in a secure adhesive binding;
  - (b) A Thesis Access Declaration form.
2. **After the viva voce examination** has taken place and any necessary amendments have been approved, two copies of the thesis must be hard bound according to the specifications below and deposited with the Graduate School.
3. For all students one copy of the final version of the thesis must be deposited electronically in the institutional repository, one copy of the thesis must be hard bound according to the specifications below and deposited with the Graduate School to be forwarded to the Library.
4. A thesis for which approval has been granted for submission in an **Alternative Format** shall include:
  - (a) an introductory chapter covering the whole of the background and context of the research and demonstrating the overall unity of approach(es) and theme(s);
  - (b) a final chapter summarising the achievements and conclusions of the whole of the research;
  - (c) a full statement of authorship for each multi-authored publication, accompanied by written certification by the other authors of each publication of the proportion for which credit is due the candidate for carrying out the research and preparing the publication; and
  - (d) where appropriate a consolidated bibliography, in addition to these elements as they appear in individual paper-format chapters.
5. *Note: a candidate may be advised to include a comprehensive methodology chapter, in addition to these elements as they appear in individual paper-format chapters. Further advice may be found in the guidelines published by the Graduate School.*
6. All items submitted for the degree of **PhD by Published Work** with the exception of books, shall be submitted for examination in a secure binding, with each of the three sets of publications being fixed securely between covers, together with the covering paper. A frontispiece, giving the author's name, the name of the degree and year of submission, shall be included.
7. If the degree is awarded, one print copy of the submission is required for deposition in the University Library. For all students unpublished material contained in the thesis must be submitted as an 'edited thesis' as an electronic deposit.

#### Submission and deposit: MPhil theses

8. Candidates shall submit to the Graduate School copies of the thesis (one per examiner) in a secure adhesive binding. After the examiners' recommendations have been made known to the student and any necessary amendments have been approved two copies of the thesis must be hard bound according to the specifications below and deposited with the Graduate School.
9. One copy of a thesis shall normally be retained for public use in the University Library. These copies shall be submitted to the Graduate School.
10. One electronic copy of the thesis will normally be deposited in the institutional repository. The candidate, in consultation with the supervisor and head of department, shall instruct the Library if the thesis is not to be made available immediately for general public use. No thesis normally shall be withheld from public use for more than five years.
11. A candidate who is required by the examiners to make corrections to the thesis shall complete the corrections within three months of receiving, from the internal examiner, notice of the corrections to be made. A candidate who is required by the examiners to make minor amendments to the thesis shall complete the amendments within six months of receiving, from the internal examiner, notice of the amendments to be made. The degree shall not be awarded

## Guide to the Examination of Research Degrees (MPhil, PhD)

until the thesis has been corrected or amended to the satisfaction of the examiners and the revised hardbound copies have been submitted to the Graduate School.

### Word Length

12. A thesis for the degree of MPhil shall not normally exceed 60,000 words (including any footnotes and appendices but excluding the bibliography); or below a minimum of 40,000 words.
13. A thesis for the degree of PhD shall not normally exceed 80,000 words (including any footnotes and appendices but excluding the bibliography), without prior approval from the body with delegated authority from Academic Board. A PhD thesis would not normally be below 60,000 words.
14. Candidates shall make a declaration of the word length of the thesis and confirm that it does not exceed the permitted maximum. If it does exceed the permitted maximum, the declaration shall include a confirmation that the Director of Research and Head of the Graduate School on behalf of the University have formally agreed this.

### Format and Requirements: all theses

15. All Theses shall be written in English.
16. Candidates must avoid typographical, spelling and other minor errors. If any such errors are made, the candidate must correct them to the examiners' satisfaction before a degree is awarded.
17. The author's full names and degrees, the title of the thesis, word count, the degree for which the thesis is submitted, University of Cumbria and the month and year of submission shall appear on the first leaf of the thesis and at the top of the abstract. The statement "Thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor/Master (delete as appropriate) of Philosophy" should be added.
18. Each thesis shall be preceded by an abstract not exceeding 300 words typed as specified below in a form suitable for use in major abstract indices.
19. The text of the thesis shall be word processed on good quality A4 paper (210 mm x 297 mm), using double line spacing, leaving a left hand margin of 38 mm, and a margin of 25 mm on the other three sides. Diagrams and illustrations shall be reproduced or mounted on similar paper; any that cannot be folded on A4 size must be submitted in a suitable portfolio, which shall bear the particulars, listed in 2.4 above.
20. The author shall provide as an integral part of the thesis a comprehensive list of contents, including diagrams, illustrative matter and any appendices; bibliography comprehending all materials cited or referred to in the whole submission; and must indicate if any part of the thesis is bound separately.
21. Pagination shall extend to the whole of each volume, including any diagrams, appendices, or other matter. For preliminary matter roman numerals may be used. If chapters have numerical subdivisions these shall be recorded in the contents list.
22. Candidates must make a declaration that the thesis is their own work, and has not been submitted in substantially the same form for the award of a higher degree elsewhere. Any sections of the thesis, which have been published, or submitted for a higher degree elsewhere, shall be clearly identified. If the thesis is the result of joint research, a statement indicating the nature of the candidate's contribution to that research, confirmed by the supervisor(s), shall be included.
23. Students must make a declaration granting the institutional repository a number of permissions and conditions with respect to online access to their work. If any subsidiary material owned by third party copyright holders has been included, candidates must declare permission has been sought and obtained to make it available in digital format.

### Citing References

24. The University of Cumbria uses a Harvard style as its main referencing approach; further guidance on [Citing references](#) is available on University of Cumbria Library's website. Please check with your supervisor the most appropriate referencing style for your field of study such as Harvard, APA, Chicago and Vancouver.

## Guide to the Examination of Research Degrees (MPhil, PhD)

### Binding of theses – specifications

25. There are two stages of binding:
  - a. Soft binding
  - b. Hard binding

#### **Soft binding**

26. You must submit one copy of your thesis for each examiner plus an additional copy if a chair has been appointed for your viva voce examination.
27. A soft-bound thesis comprises a card backing, a clear acetate cover and a thermal binding.
28. The University of Cumbria Print Unit can soft bind theses up to 350 pages including covers on 80gsm (35mm; 1.5 inches).
  - (a) Print Unit, University of Cumbria  
The Stables, Bowerham Road  
Lancaster, LA1 3JD  
01524 384315 - ext. 4315  
email: [print.unit@cumbria.ac.uk](mailto:print.unit@cumbria.ac.uk)
29. *Please note: If you choose to use the University of Cumbria Print Unit, please send an email to [print.unit@cumbria.ac.uk](mailto:print.unit@cumbria.ac.uk) with two pdf attachments: one for colour if applicable and the other black and white. This will ensure that all formatting and page settings will be unaffected. Please allow the Print Unit a week's notice and call in to view your thesis on the screen before it is printed. Discuss with the Print Unit payment options.*

#### **Hard Binding**

30. Pages, which should be trimmed on all edges, should be bound in a fixed permanent binding, rounded and backed boards to be of a quality strong enough to support the volume when standing on the shelf and having a square on all edges;
31. covering material to be of a cotton woven library buckram or rexine with a washable surface; cloth colours black (MPhil), and blue (PhD);
32. lettering to be in silver. In capital letters reading down the spine, candidate's surname, followed by initials; across the lower half of the spine, title of degree, the word 'CUMBRIA', and the year of submission;
33. photographs and other mounted illustrations should be added after the thesis has been bound. Where mounted material is to be used a system of permanent guarding must be provided.
34. Print Unit, University of Cumbria, The Stables, Bowerham Road, Lancaster, LA1 3JD  
01524 384315 - ext. 4315 email: [print.unit@cumbria.ac.uk](mailto:print.unit@cumbria.ac.uk)
35. Additional copies (e.g. for the student's own personal use) may be sent to the print unit at the same time as the official copies. The binding of such personal copies may, at the student's discretion, be delayed until after the thesis has been approved (in which case any necessary corrections can be incorporated).

## Guide to the Examination of Research Degrees (MPhil, PhD)

### APPENDIX 3: REGULATIONS FOR SPECIFIC DOCTORAL AWARDS OR PROGRAMMES

#### Research degrees undertaken in Institute of the Arts (see *PhD by Art Practice Brief Guide*)

1. Subject to careful negotiation with Institute of the Arts, a candidate for the degree of PhD or MPhil may submit, as an alternative to the standard PhD or MPhil written thesis, a project on a single research topic that has two components:
  - (a) a written thesis; and
  - (b) a substantial practical work (e.g., a theatrical production, installation, exhibition of work, recital, lecture-recital, or some other performative event, a play, a translation, a design, computer software, etc.).
2. The practical and written components, which interdependently constitute the “thesis” as such, will be evaluated in relation to each other after the written component has been submitted.
3. The examiners will evaluate the practical and written components according to the extent to which they both respond to a single list of specific and explicit research questions, which should be submitted prior to the presentation of the practical component.
4. The practical component must negotiate and articulate a response to the research questions through a high level of skill in the manipulation of the materials of production or performance event. For the degree of PhD, the practical component, which can consist of a minor and a major submission, should normally be of an appropriate professional standard.
5. If the practical component involves the creation of a performance event/works or exhibition of work other practical outputs could also include, a model/prototype, or a series of conceptual works:
  - (a) the board of examiners is required to attend the performance;
  - (b) an audio-visual record of that event/work, or even live performances of that work on tour, will not be acceptable in *lieu* of a live performance at a designated venue unless the medium of video and DVD, the contingencies of touring, or the absence of locality, are factored into the research topic.
6. A permanent record of the practical component should normally be deposited with the written thesis in the University Library. If this creative aspect involves live performance or exhibition of work the permanent record should normally comprise:
  - (a) a DVD and where appropriate an audio recording
  - (b) a short written factual description of the performance event or exhibition and its materials;
  - (c) any artefacts or documentation integral to the creation of the work (e.g. audio tapes, production book, photographs, notation, copies of scores);
  - (d) in the case of design, the design output could be included in documented form in the thesis itself, either in paper format or as a DVD, both of which form a permanent record of the work.
7. Just as the examiners can, according to the rules of the University, require the candidate to amend or revise a written thesis in part or in whole as a condition of an award. They can also require the candidate to amend or revise the practical component in part or in whole, but only on the condition that they are not satisfied that any shortcomings in the practical submission can be compensated or accounted for in the written thesis. In such a case, the examiners should, wherever possible, set a cost-effective practical assignment that addresses their concerns rather than demand a revision of the original practical work in its entirety.
8. The written thesis must be of a quality commensurate with the usual standards set for MPhil or PhD, but need not be of the same length. The Graduate School will advise each candidate on the exact *minimum* length of the written thesis. For a 50/50 split assessment the written thesis should not normally exceed 40,000 words for a PhD and 20,000 words for a MPhil (including any footnotes and appendices but excluding the bibliography). In other cases (e.g. 70/30 thesis/practical split) the supervisor, the appropriate upgrade panel and the body with delegated

## Guide to the Examination of Research Degrees (MPhil, PhD)

authority from Academic Board will agree the word count. The length of the written thesis should normally be agreed on a proportionate basis.

9. Entry requirements for candidates who wish to pursue a research degree with a practical component within the university are as follows:
  - (a) all candidates would normally be expected to hold at least a good second class degree of a recognised institution or comparable institution or qualifications regarded by the University as equivalent;
  - (b) candidates should provide clear supporting evidence of experience and competence in a field of practice directly relevant to their proposed topic of study. While this experience may not necessarily have been gained within the professional sphere, candidates will be expected to demonstrate that they have achieved, or have the potential to achieve a “professional standard” of practice.
10. If the candidate is employed by the University as a member of staff, a second external examiner will be appointed. This examiner will preferably, but not necessarily, view the practical component, and has the primary function of ensuring that the whole thesis is scrutinised fairly.

### **Alternative format** (see *PhD by Alternative Format Brief guide*)

11. The Graduate School shall maintain and publish guidelines on the alternative format(s) judged appropriate to the discipline, for the information of students, supervisors and examiners.

#### Notes:

- (a) a candidate is encouraged to seek advice within her/his department that the alternative format is more appropriate for the research project and that s/he can take full advantage of the alternative format;
  - (b) supervising departments are encouraged to seek, where practicable, the advice of the External Examiner(s) with respect to the alternative format proposed; and
  - (c) the guidelines shall form the basis of agreement between the student, supervisor and head of department (or her/his nominee) on the alternative format to be employed in the submission.
17. The thesis shall include original, researched materials, of which a significant proportion shall be derived from original research undertaken after the date of first registration.

Notes: materials may be:

- (a) already published; and/or
- (b) accepted for publication; and/or
- (c) submitted for publication in externally refereed contexts such as journals, conference proceedings and on-line sites, and may include materials, which are solely and/or partly authored by the candidate.

It is not a requirement that the materials be published or accepted or submitted for publication, prior to the submission of the thesis for examination.

18. Examiners shall satisfy themselves that the thesis as a whole meets the criteria for award of the degree, as outlined above.

Notes: examiners:

- (a) may wish to pay particular attention to satisfying themselves that of any multi-authored materials included, a significant proportion is the work principally of the candidate; and
- (b) are reminded of the freedom to specify additional tests as part of the examination.

### **PhD by Published Work** (see *PhD by Published Work Brief Guide*)

#### *Award criteria*

19. To be awarded a PhD by Published Work a candidate must show that his or her work makes a significant contribution to knowledge in a particular field. The publications must also provide evidence of the capacity of the candidate to pursue further research, representing a coherent contribution to research in a given field and demonstrating a depth of scholarship and originality comparable with that required in a PhD thesis. The material submitted shall be sufficiently

## Guide to the Examination of Research Degrees (MPhil, PhD)

extensive as to provide convincing evidence that the research constitutes a substantial contribution to knowledge or scholarship.

### *Admissions criteria*

20. Candidates for the degree of PhD by submission of published work must be:
  - (a) members or past members of staff at University of Cumbria or
  - (b) alumni of University of Cumbria
21. In order to be eligible for consideration, alumni must be graduates of at least five years' standing and have already obtained a Masters degree or show evidence of having received research training or equivalent experience. In exceptional circumstances, other candidates may also be considered.

### *Applications and registration*

22. Applications may be made at any time. A letter of application should be accompanied by:
  - a. a list of the publications to be submitted: these may include refereed articles, authored chapters, authored books, and edited works. They may not include course readers, internally published material or unpublished seminar/conference papers; and
  - b. a supporting paper: this should summarise each publication submitted, outline their interrelationship, give a critical review of the current state of knowledge and research in the applicant's field and indicate how his or her work has contributed to the field. It should also comment on the standing of any journals and the reception of the publications as indicated by citations and reviews.
23. The candidate's application shall first be considered by the Head of the Graduate School, in consultation with the Head of the appropriate department. If the application is accepted, the applicant will then be registered to submit for the degree of PhD by Published Work, and an internal adviser will be appointed by the Graduate School to assist the candidate. A minimum period of three months and a maximum period of twelve months are allowed before submission.

### *Examination*

24. Candidate shall submit for examination:
  - a. three copies, in published form, of each item forming part of the work on which the application for the degree by published work is based. Permission to include work in manuscript, but which has been accepted for publication, may be granted;
  - b. four copies of the supporting paper, modified, if necessary after consultation with the advisor;
  - c. a statement as to what part if any of the material has been submitted for a degree or other qualification in this or any other University or other institution, explaining the reason for its inclusion and, if joint work is submitted, what part of it is the candidate's contribution.
25. The body with delegated authority from Academic Board on behalf of the Committee of the Academic Board on the nomination of the department concerned shall appoint a panel of examiners consisting of one internal and two External Examiners. The internal examiner will not normally have been appointed as adviser to the candidate. An oral examination will normally be held for the degree, but this requirement may be waived with the approval of the body with delegated authority from Academic Board provided that all the examiners are in agreement.
26. The examiners shall make one of the following recommendations:
  - a. that the degree of PhD by published work be awarded;
  - b. that the degree be awarded subject to specified revisions of the supporting paper; or
  - c. that the degree be not awarded.
27. The examiners may not recommend the award of a lower degree.
28. A candidate whose work has been found unacceptable for the award of the degree may be permitted to resubmit only after completing re-registration; normally, this would be no earlier than two years after the original submission.

**Guide to the Examination of Research Degrees (MPhil, PhD)**

29. The body with delegated authority from Academic Board on behalf of the Committee of the Academic Board considers examiners' reports and recommendations, and a decision is given to the candidate within one month of the oral examination.

**Appendix 4: Viva voce examinations via video-conferencing**

1. Video-conferencing facilities may be used in viva voce examinations only when either an examiner or the candidate is based at such a distance from the University that it is unreasonable, because of prohibitively high cost, difficulties of time or restricted mobility, to insist that all parties should be present in the same location.
2. It is strongly recommended that those involved should not be in more than two locations.
3. The consent of all involved must be obtained prior to any party being allowed to participate via video-conferencing.
4. The candidate's supervisor(s) and internal examiner are responsible for ensuring that all parties involved in the examination are informed in good time of the details of the video-conferencing arrangements.
5. The Graduate School must be informed and arrange set up, in advance of the examination, if any party is to be participating via video-conferencing.
6. Any time differences between the two locations must be taken into account to ensure that the candidate is not disadvantaged by an examination taking place at an inappropriate time.
7. The equipment/software should be tested at least one week in advance of the examination, using the same computers, systems and locations as will be used for the examination. Care must be taken to ensure that the technology used is as reliable as possible.
8. Contingency plans are essential in the event of technology failure.
9. The set-up of the conference facilities should be such that all those involved should be able to see one another at all times.
10. Where the candidate is the remote party, a member of University of Cumbria staff who can confirm the candidate's identity must be present at the beginning of the examination, and any materials brought into the conference by the candidate should be identified at the start of the examination and be visible throughout.
11. The University will not normally permit any person to be present with the candidate other than technical staff involved in the use of video-conferencing facilities.
12. When concluding a viva voce examination, which has involved video-conferencing, all participants should be asked to confirm that the holding of the examination by video-conference has had no substantive bearing on the examination process.
13. If not co-located, the examiners may agree on the wording of the joint report by email or telephone. Each examiner should sign the independent report and the joint report and forward them to Graduate School as soon as possible after the examination.
14. Examiners should comment on the conduct of the viva voce examination using the standard examiner's report form and should refer explicitly to the use of video-conferencing.
15. Having agreed to a viva voce examination involving video-conferencing the candidate will not be permitted to use this as grounds for appeal, unless the circumstances of technical failure or other unforeseen eventualities beyond the control of the Board of Examiners were deemed to have adversely affected the candidate's performance and these were identified at the end of the examination (see 12 above).