

Policy on PhD by Published Works

This policy has been drawn up by the University's Committee on Researcher Development and Postgraduate Research Studies. They draw on similar arrangements in place at a number of other UK Higher Education Institutions. The degree of PhD by Published Works is intended for candidates who have developed their knowledge and independent research skills to doctoral level and who have a body of publications produced during the course of their careers either within or outside academia. Although the criteria for admission, registration periods, and format of thesis differ, the expected quality of outputs, and the candidate's understanding of the wider field of knowledge, is equivalent to that for the more traditional PhD by thesis.

Eligibility criteria for admission

Candidates must either be:

- (i) Members of University staff, holding a Bachelor's honours or Master's degree, who should have been employed by the University for a minimum of two years and have completed their probationary period; **or**
- (ii) Graduates of at least three years standing, holding a Bachelor's honours degree from any University recognised by Reading as being of an acceptable standard. Exceptionally, this requirement may be waived where there is an acceptable body of professional work;
- (iii) Candidates whose first language is not English will normally be asked to provide evidence that their English Language capability will enable them to succeed in their chosen research degree. The entry requirement will depend on the School/Department to which they are applying but will normally be 6.5-7.0 in the IELTS examination or an equivalent test accepted by the University. Exceptions may be made where the candidate has recently studied or worked in a country where English is the native language and this will be assessed as part of the application process;

- (iv) Candidates must have an appropriate number of and quality of publications which form a coherent body of research, which is judged to be timely and current, and which demonstrates the use of appropriate research methodology. These publications will normally have been published (or accepted for publication) within the past 10 years and not have been used as part of a submission for another research degree. The work must demonstrate a depth of scholarship, criticality and originality comparable with that required in a traditional PhD;
- (v) For the purpose of this document, the term 'Published Works' or 'Publications' is used to reflect a variety of research outputs, including:
 - a. Papers or articles in refereed journals, which are published or 'in press'
 - b. Substantial or sole contribution to a book
 - c. Chapters in books
 - d. Papers presented to conferences which are available in the published proceedings of the conference
 - e. Published data sets, granted patents, or creative artefacts
 - f. Exhibitions or performances of which a permanent record has been made.The work to be submitted would normally have been subject to external peer review and be available and accessible in the public domain. All original research to be included in the submission must be completed prior to acceptance on the programme.

Registration

- (i) The minimum registration period is 12 months and the maximum registration period is 24 months;
- (ii) Candidates would need to make a case to the Associate Pro-Vice Chancellor (Postgraduate Research Studies and Researcher Development) in order for these periods to be amended. Fee reductions are not available to students who are granted permission to submit early.
- (iii) It is possible to apply to undertake a PhD by Published Works from any location worldwide.

Fees

Candidates are required to pay the appropriate fee according to their mode of attendance for the minimum registration period, after which they will pay the standard continuation fee.

Application process

Pre-admission Phase: Candidates are advised to contact the Director of Postgraduate Research Studies in the relevant academic School / Department to make an informal enquiry in the first instance. If it is deemed that the amount and nature of the published work could potentially form the basis of a PhD submission, and that the School / Department could provide the necessary supervision, then the candidate would be asked to submit copies of the outputs, together with a statement (of no more than 500 words) outlining the key research questions and how these are addressed by the research presented in the outputs. The submitted documentation would be assessed by the School / Department Director of Postgraduate Research Studies and at least one other member of academic staff.

The candidate will be advised of the outcome of this assessment, by the Director, normally within six weeks of submission of the work.

Formal application: If the outcome of the assessment is positive, candidates will be required to submit a formal application through the University of Reading [postgraduate online application system](#). The application must include a personal statement in which the candidate confirms that the application is for a PhD by Published Works.

Composition of PhD submission

The submitted work should include:

- (i) An Abstract and declaration of authorship;
- (ii) A number of publications that together demonstrate evidence of an amount of research which is at a standard of academic quality deemed to be appropriate for the award of a Doctorate; we do not specify a “number” of publications as this varies by discipline and on the nature of the outputs.
- (iii) In the case of jointly authored work, the candidate must provide proof of having made a substantive contribution to the output;
- (iv) A contextual chapter (up to 10,000 words) which provides a critical overview and synthesis of the outputs and their contribution to the discipline;
- (v) The overall maximum word length of the submitted work is 90,000 words;
- (vi) Where the submitted work is not in the form of articles, book chapters or monograph, there might be some agreed variation to points (ii) and (iii).

Supervision

Once enrolled, candidates for the PhD by Published Works will require support and guidance on writing the overarching contextual chapter. In relation to such supervision:

- (i) The supervisor must have the necessary supervisory experience (i.e. they should have previously supervised at least one PhD student to successful completion within their maximum registration period) in the relevant area;
- (ii) The role of the supervisor will be to:
 - a. Guide the candidate in the final selection of outputs to be included in the submission;
 - b. Support and advise on the development of the overarching contextual chapter;
 - c. Advise the candidate on any necessary research training requirements;
 - d. Advise and support the candidate on preparation for the viva and in undertaking any amendments to the work following examination at first attempt.

Examination process

- (i) Candidates will need to inform the Doctoral Examinations Officer in the Doctoral and Researcher College of their intention to submit at least three months prior to the planned submission date;
- (ii) The formatting of the work should comply with the [Rules for the Submission of Theses for Research Degrees](#);
- (iii) The thesis will need to be [submitted electronically](#) to the Doctoral Examinations Officer in the Doctoral and Researcher College;
- (iv) Examiners will be appointed in the same way as for traditional PhD by thesis, with two external examiners and an independent chair being appointed for candidates who are members of staff of the University;
- (v) The examination process and criteria for assessment are the same as those for the PhD by thesis, as set out in the [Code of Practice on Research Students](#).
In particular, examiners will be asked to:
 - (a) evaluate the intellectual merit of the candidate's submitted published work;
 - (b) establish if a satisfactory case is made for coherence between the publications;

- (c) assess the contribution to knowledge represented by the publications and made apparent in the contextual chapter;
- (d) evaluate the rigour with which the candidate has contextualised and analysed their publications in the contextual chapter;
- (e) evaluate the appropriateness of the methods employed in the research and the correctness of their application;
- (f) assess the candidate's contribution to the research embodied in multi-authored works and establish the candidate's ownership of the published work; and
- (g) establish the candidate's appreciation of the state of historical and current knowledge within the candidate's research area.

The potential outcomes of the viva, with one exception, are the same as those for PhD by Thesis (award the PhD, minor amendments, major amendments, fail). Students who fail at first attempt are entitled to resubmit a revised thesis within three years. For this programme, examiners will not have the option of considering candidates for the award of the degree of MPhil where the candidate's work does not meet the criteria for the award of PhD. Candidates will have the normal right of Appeal to the Standing Committee on Examination Results.

Doctoral and Researcher College

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