Aston University

GENERAL REGULATIONS FOR RESEARCH DEGREES BY STAFF AND GRADUATES OF ASTON UNIVERSITY

INCLUDING
DOCTOR OF SCIENCE (DSc)
DOCTOR OF LETTERS (DLitt)

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY (PhD)*
MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY (MPhil)*

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY (PhD) BY PREVIOUSLY PUBLISHED WORK

***Should be used in conjunction with General Regulations for Degrees by Research and Thesis**

ASTON UNIVERSITY

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1 NATURE OF THE DEGREES

1.1 Master of Philosophy or Doctor of Philosophy by research and thesis

The degree of Doctor of Philosophy or Master of Philosophy may be awarded to a candidate adjudged by the Senate to have successfully completed and been examined in a programme of study in accordance with the General Regulations for Degrees by Research and Thesis, supplemented by the additional regulations for staff candidates, where appropriate.

The general principles for any submission for a degree by research and thesis also apply. (See General Regulations for Degrees by Research and Thesis).

1.2 Doctor of Philosophy by previously published work

The degree of Doctor of Philosophy by previously published work may be awarded to a candidate adjudged by the Senate to have produced published work which is the result of a coherent programme of research and which has made a substantial and original contribution to knowledge. The candidate will submit published work and will undergo a *viva voce* examination on the research by two examiners. The University does not allow submission by previously published work for degrees at Master's level (including MPhil).

The general principles for any submission for a degree by research and thesis also apply. (See General Regulations for Degrees by Research and Thesis).

1.3 Doctor of Science or Doctor of Letters

The degree of Doctor of Science or Doctor of Letters may be awarded to a candidate adjudged by the Senate to have produced published work, over several years, constituting a distinguished, substantial and original contribution to knowledge, which indicates that the candidate has an authoritative standing in his or her subject, often internationally. The number and status of publications submitted is expected to be substantially higher than for a Doctor of Philosophy by Previously Published Work, and the applicant would normally be at a later stage in their career.

2 ELIGIBILITY

2.1 MPhil or PhD by research and thesis (staff candidates)

Any member of University staff of at least one years' standing may be eligible to enrol for a Degree by Research and Thesis, subject to the provisions of

Section 2 (Entry Qualifications) of the General Regulations for Degrees by Research and Thesis.

2.2 PhD by Previously Published Work

2.2.1 Any member of University staff, of at least one years' standing, may be eligible to enrol for a PhD by Previously Published Work subject to the provisions of Section 2 (Entry Qualifications) of the General Regulations for Degrees by Research and Thesis. Clinical Fellows, Teaching Fellows and Research Fellows may count their period of employment with the University towards the qualifying time for eligibility to submit for the degree.

2.2.2 Any graduate of the University (or a holder of the Diploma of Technology who pursued a full-time course of study extending over at least two academic years in the former Birmingham College of Advanced Technology) of at least seven years' standing beyond the date of their first graduation in the University may notify the University of their wish to submit for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy by Previously Published Work.

2.2.3 Past employees of the University who are not graduates of the University are not eligible to submit for the degree.

2.3 Doctor of Science or Doctor of Letters

2.3.1 A candidate for the degree of Doctor of Science or Doctor of Letters shall be:

either a graduate of the University at any time after the lapse of seven years from the date of his or her first graduation in the University. A holder of the Diploma of Technology who pursued a full-time course of study extending over at least two academic years in the former Birmingham College of Advanced Technology is deemed to be a graduate of the University for the purposes of eligibility for the award of the degree of Doctor of Science or Doctor of Letters;

or a member of the staff of the University. Candidates must have held the post for a minimum of three years.

2.3.2 Clinical Fellows, Teaching Fellows and Research Fellows, whilst not members of academic staff, may count their period of employment with the University towards the qualifying time for eligibility to submit for the degree of Doctor of Science or Doctor of Letters.

2.3.3 Past employees of the University who are not graduates of the University are

not eligible to submit for the degree.

3 MPHIL OR PHD BY RESEARCH AND THESIS (STAFF CANDIDATES)

3.1 Requirements for the award

In order to qualify for the award of a degree by research and thesis a member of the staff of the University must have:

a occupied the post for at least one year prior to enrolment;

b enrolled as a staff candidate;

c pursued a course of research within the time limits prescribed in these Regulations;

d presented a satisfactory thesis upon the subject of the research;

e satisfactorily undergone a *viva voce* examination unless, in extraordinary circumstances, a written examination has been substituted under the provisions of General Regulation 18(e);

f paid the appropriate fees and discharged all other obligations to the University.

3.2 Supervision by staff candidates

A staff candidate normally should not undertakes or continue the supervision of a research student during the period of enrolment.

3.3 Fees

3.3.1 The University encourages staff to enrol on degree programmes by research and thesis providing that the Executive Dean or Head of Subject Group considers the programme to be relevant to the needs of the Service Department or School, the University and the individual.

3.3.2 The University meets the cost of the standard home fee for any research degree programme, but any additional, premium fee will be met by either the member of staff or the School/Service in which the individual is employed, if agreed by the Executive Dean/Head of Subject Group.

3.3.3 Staff who leave the University during their course of study will be allowed to complete that year, but any further financial support will be subject to University approval, depending on the circumstances of the departure.

3.3.4 The University reserves the right to review the number of staff it supports on such programmes from time to time. (*Council Minute 99/60*)

3.4 Time limits

3.4.1 It is assumed that the degree will be undertaken on a part-time basis.

3.4.2 If a candidate is able to work full-time on the research - for example during a period of study leave - this will not affect the time limits specified below.

3.4.3 The period of enrolment should not exceed four years (MPhil) or six years (PhD), from the research start date.

3.4.4 Each staff candidate must be enrolled for at least two years before submitting an MPhil thesis and four years before submitting a PhD thesis.

3.5 Submission of thesis

3.5.1 A registered staff candidate who leaves the University shall continue to be bound by the time limits specified in Regulations 3.4 above.

3.6 Examination

3.6.1 Staff candidates will be examined in accordance with the General Regulations for Degrees by Research and Thesis and these Regulations.

3.6.2 Two External Examiners must be appointed by the Senate to examine a thesis submitted by a staff candidate. The Internal Supervisor is responsible for initiating the procedures for appointing Examiners and for making the arrangements for the *viva voce* examination of a staff candidate but may not act as an Examiner.

3.6.3 No Internal Examiner or additional Examiner may be appointed for a staff candidate.

3.6.4 The following persons must attend the *viva voce* examination:

the staff candidate;
the two External Examiners;
an independent non-examining Chair who normally should be appointed from within the relevant School. The Chair should not have had a substantial involvement in the candidate's work or have been involved in the appointment of the Examiners, but should have experience of research degree assessment.

The Supervisor may, unless the candidate objects, attend the *viva voce* examination. The Supervisor may be invited by the Examiners or the Independent Chair to participate in discussions but will be requested to leave before any decision is taken, and should not sign any of the Examiners' reports or recommendations.

The Supervisor may nominate an Associate Supervisor to attend the *viva voce* in his or her place.

3.6.5 No other person may be present at the *viva voce* examination without obtaining permission in advance from the Senate, or the Vice-Chancellor or Senior Pro-Vice-Chancellor on behalf of the Senate.

3.6.6 The conduct of the examination should follow the requirements of the General Regulations (Regulations 17-23) with the exception of Regulation 20(d) and 23.5(d) which are not applicable to staff candidates. Instead, one of the External Examiners may authorise the other External Examiner to approve the staff candidate's completion of minor revisions and will submit alongside the copies of the thesis/portfolio a signed statement certifying that they are identical versions of the work assessed by the Examiners, except where revisions were made at their request.

4 PHD BY PREVIOUSLY PUBLISHED WORK

4.1 Application

4.1.1 The application for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy by previously published work shall be in respect of work which has already been published, based either wholly or to a substantial extent on original work by the candidate.

4.1.2 In order to be accepted for admission a School of Study must confirm it will provide a mentor to support the applicant during the period between admission and examination when the candidate prepares their final submission. The School will appoint a member of staff to provide guidance on the application for admission if the candidate so requests.

4.2 Application for Enrolment on the Degree

4.2.1 The applicant must submit an application in writing for admission to the programme. This should be to the Secretary of the Graduate School Management Committee (or their nominee). The applicant should state clearly the title of the degree to which admission is sought i.e. PhD by Previously Published Work.

4.2.2 Applications shall be accompanied by the following:

a details of the published work that the candidate wishes to be considered
b a covering note indicating how and in what respect the work has made a coherent substantial and original contribution to the current state of knowledge
c a statement indicating the extent to which the work has been carried out by the candidate and a clear indication of any parts of the work which have been carried out in collaboration with other parties/authors or which have been submitted previously for any other degree or qualification. Further, if the work is the result of collaborative research, a statement must be provided by the collaborating researcher(s), confirming the contribution made to the research by the candidate

d a statement of support from the Associate Dean Research of the appropriate School including a named member of academic staff who will be the Mentor

e a statement by the candidate as to whether or not the work or any part thereof has been submitted, successfully or unsuccessfully, for a degree of this or any other University

f a Curriculum Vitae including details of research experience, degrees and other qualifications held (with the class of degree, subject, year of the award and the name of the awarding institution). Full particulars necessary to establish the candidate's eligibility as a graduate or member of staff should also be given

4.2.3 An appropriate sub-group of the Graduate School Management Committee will examine the application for admission and the details of advisory arrangements provided by the School to determine whether the application for admission should be accepted.

4.2.4 The sub-group may request additional information before making a decision including a meeting with the prospective candidate and a representative of the supporting School and/or advice from an independent subject expert. The decision as to whether an application is accepted rests solely with the University and is not subject to appeal.

4.2.5 The Secretary of the Graduate School Management Committee (or nominee) will then advise the candidate of the decision.

4.2.6 Candidates whose application for admission is accepted will be expected to make a full submission by a specified date, normally no later than 12 months after the date of notification of admission. The candidate should prepare their submission under the guidance of the School Mentor.

4.2.7 Candidates whose application for admission is not accepted may reapply with no time limit placed on the revised application.

4.3 Enrolment and Fees

4.3.1 If the application for admission is accepted the candidate shall be expected to enrol. A candidate enrolled for a research degree shall abide by the University’s policies, procedures and regulations and is entitled to access the normal facilities provided for those enrolled.

4.3.2 On enrolment the candidate will be asked to pay the fee prescribed by the Senate and Council.

4.3.3 A candidate for the degree of PhD by previously published work shall normally be required to complete a minimum period of six months during which the candidate will prepare the submission under the guidance of the School Advisor. The date of submission shall normally be no later than 12 months after registration.

4.4 Submission

4.4.1 Submissions shall be made in writing to the Secretary of the Graduate School Management Committee (or their nominee) by the date specified at admission.

4.4.2 Submissions shall include three copies of the previously published work (or other research output) and the overview of research on which the candidate bases his or her submission for the degree presented in accordance with the General Regulations for the Presentation of Theses:

a The nature of research output varies from one candidate to another and also between research areas. The most important issue is the quality of the research. The examiners must be convinced that the cited research output represents an acceptable contribution to the field and that the methodologies embodied in it are appropriate. In this respect, the issue of number is subservient to the question of the quality and impact of the output. As a guide the following would normally be expected:

either A minimum of four research articles from refereed journals (or other equivalent academic output)

or One research monograph

b Critical appraisal of the research contained within the submission is fundamental to the establishment of the coherence and quality of the submission and hence for the case for the award of the degree. The overview of the research is therefore of critical importance to the submission and should:

i show how the work makes a significant and coherent contribution to knowledge, or to the advancement of the discipline
ii provide an assessment of the impact of the publications contained in the submission, including an appropriate contextualisation of the submitted published works
iii explain the relevance and criteria for selection of any methodologies used
iv outline the themes that give the publications their defining coherence
v state the candidate's role in cases of co-authored works and make the attribution of the candidate's submitted work clear to the examiners in the commentary
vi show how specific publications have been tailored for publication (if any) (editing out of experimental data, for example)
vii review any publications by the author which are referenced but not presented as part of the submission
viii pay particular attention to ensuring that factors such as availability of raw data from which cited publications draw conclusions, are

fully taken into account in the commentary or accompanying documentation

ix include a title page and abstract

4.5 Examination

4.5.1 The Senate has delegated to the Graduate School Management Committee the responsibility for overseeing the submission and examination processes for Degrees by Previously Published Work. The Graduate School Management Committee will set up a sub-group for each candidate, comprising the Chair and two or three other members. The sub-group will include at least one specialist in the subject area. The appointment of examiners and the award of the degree will be approved by the Senate.

4.5.2 Candidates external to the University must be examined by one External Examiner and one Internal Examiner who shall be a member of the Academic Staff. Staff employed by the University must be examined by two External Examiners.

4.5.3 The Secretary to the Graduate School Management Committee (or their nominee) will make informal approaches, on behalf of the Committee, to possible examiners. The appointment of the examiners will then be approved by the Vice-Chancellor (or their nominee) on behalf of the Senate.

4.5.4 Following their formal appointment each Examiner must be sent a copy of the final submission. Before the oral examination each Examiner must read the published work and critical appraisal and submit to the sub-group (via the Secretary to the Graduate School Management Committee) an independent written report giving reasons for judging the published work satisfactory or unsatisfactory.

4.5.5 An oral examination must be held at which the Examiners test the candidate's knowledge of the research upon which the published work is based. The Advisor is responsible for arranging the oral examination. The following persons must attend:

The candidate
The two Examiners
The Independent Non-examining Chair

4.5.6 The Mentor may attend the oral examination with the agreement of the candidate but will be requested to leave before any decision is taken, and should not sign any of the Examiners' reports or recommendations.

4.5.7 No other person may be present at the oral examination without the approval in advance of the Graduate School Management Committee.

4.5.8 The Examiners must submit to the group, via the Secretary to the Graduate School Management Committee (or their nominee), a joint report on the candidate's performance at the oral examination.

4.5.9 If both Examiners are satisfied with the published work and with the candidate's performance at the oral examination, they must jointly recommend the award of either the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

4.5.10 If both Examiners are not satisfied with the published work (irrespective of the candidate's performance at the oral examination), they must jointly recommend that no degree be awarded.

4.5.11 If the Examiners are unable to agree upon a joint recommendation, they must submit individual reports to the sub-group, making clear the reasons for their disagreement. In this case the sub-group may recommend the appointment by the Senate of an External Referee Examiner, who will be asked to make an independent report and recommendation on the submission.

4.5.12 If the External Referee Examiner recommends that an award should be made, the Senate may at its discretion approve an award.

4.5.13 No award shall be made if fewer than two of the three Examiners recommend that the candidate should be admitted to the degree.

4.6 Submission after v*iva voce* examination

4.6.1 If an award is recommended to the Senate, the candidate shall supply two copies of the material submitted for the award to the Secretary of the Graduate School Management Committee (or their nominee), permanently bound as described in the General Regulations for the Presentation of MPhil and PhD Theses.

4.6.2 The University Department of Library and Information Services and the Director of Research in the relevant School shall each retain one copy of the work approved for the award of the degree. The British Library does not receive a copy as all papers and books presented in the submission will already be in the public domain.

4.7 Unsuccessful candidates

4.7.1 In the event of a degree not being awarded, the University will retain one copy of the submission and the other copy will be returned to the candidate.

4.7.2 A candidate whose submission for the degree is unsuccessful may be permitted to resubmit a revised set of published work not less than three years after the date of the previous submission. Resubmissions will be considered afresh on their own merit and should be discussed with the relevant School (and particularly the mentor) in the first instance.

5 DOCTOR OF SCIENCE OR DOCTOR OF LETTERS

5.1 Application

5.1.1 Applications for the degree of Doctor of Science or Doctor of Letters shall be in respect of published work, based either wholly or to a substantial extent on original work of distinction by the candidate.

5.1.2 Intending applicants are encouraged to seek informal advice from a senior member of the University Staff, such as the relevant Executive Dean, before proceeding further.

5.2 Application for Enrolment on the Degree

5.2.1 If candidates wish to proceed, they should provide the Secretary to the Graduate School Management Committee (or their nominee) with one copy of:

a details of the published work that the candidate wishes to be considered
b a covering note indicating how and in what respect the work has made a distinguished, substantial and original contribution to the current state of knowledge
c a statement of support from the relevant School
d a statement indicating the extent to which the work has been carried out by the candidate and a clear indication of any parts of the work which have been carried out in collaboration with other parties/authors or which have been submitted previously for any other degree or qualification. Further, if the work is the result of collaborative research, a statement must be provided by the collaborating researcher(s), confirming the contribution made to the research by the candidate
e a statement by the candidate as to whether or not the work or any part thereof has been submitted, successfully or unsuccessfully, for a degree of this or any other University
f a Curriculum Vitae, including details of research experience, degrees and other qualifications held (with the class of degree, subject, year of the award and the name of the awarding institution). Full particulars necessary to establish the candidate's eligibility as a graduate, member of academic staff or other eligible category should also be given

5.2.2 An appropriate sub-group of the Graduate School Management Committee will examine the application for admission to determine whether it should be accepted.

5.2.3 The sub-group may request additional information before making a decision including a meeting with the prospective candidate and a representative of the supporting School and/or advice from an independent subject expert.

5.2.4 The Secretary of the Graduate School Management Committee (or nominee)

will then advise the candidate of the decision.

5.2.5 Candidates whose application for admission is accepted will be expected to make a make a full submission by an agreed date.

5.2.6 Candidates whose application for admission is not accepted may reapply with no time limit placed on the revised application.

5.3 Enrolment and Fees

5.3.1 If the application for admission is accepted the candidate shall be expected to enrol. A candidate enrolled for a research degree shall abide by the University's policies, procedures and regulations and is entitled to access the normal facilities provided for those enrolled.

5.3.2 On enrolment the candidate will be asked to pay the fee prescribed by the Senate and Council.

5.4 Formal Submission before Examination

5.4.1 Submissions shall be made in writing to the Secretary to the Graduate School Management Committee (or nominee), and must be accompanied by three copies of the published work on which the candidate bases his or her submission for the degree. The published work may be loose bound at this stage, as described in the General Regulations for the Presentation of Theses. Each copy of the submission must be as follows:

a a **curriculum vitae**, including details of research experience, degrees and other qualifications held (with the class of degree, subject, year of the award and the name of the awarding institution). Full particulars necessary to establish the candidate's eligibility as a graduate or member of academic staff should also be given;

b an **outline** or **synopsis** of about 1,000 words briefly stating the main theme or themes of the candidate's publications and indicating those areas which he or she considers contain distinguished, substantial and original contributions to the advancement of knowledge;

c a **list of the submitted publications** grouped according to subject and numbered consecutively. For books, the title and the year of publication should be listed. For published papers, or chapters in books, etc, the title of the paper or contribution, full details of the publication in which each appeared, the year, volume number, part number and the first and last page should be given. A full list of authors should be given in each case. A 200 word synopsis of each book or chapter may be included if desired;

d a **declaration** of any work which has been done in collaboration indicating precisely the share which the candidate personally has taken

in each work, and the name(s) of the collaborator(s);

e a **statement** whether the work or any part of it has been submitted, successfully or unsuccessfully, for a degree of this or any other university or educational institution;

f a copy of all **papers** submitted, or **chapters of books**, where, in the candidate's opinion, it is not appropriate to submit the whole book. Photocopies of papers are acceptable; paste-ups are not. Where book chapters are lengthy they may be bound separately;

g A copy of each of the candidate's published **books** submitted in support of the application, Teaching text books and 'popular' books or articles should not be submitted unless they show considerable originality of material or approach. Where a book is out of print and copies cannot be obtained, permission to copy the book should be sought from the copyright holder.

5.5 Examination

5.5.1 The Secretary of the Graduate School Management Committee (or nominee) will make informal approaches, on behalf of the Committee, to possible external examiners (without naming the candidate). Two external examiners will then be selected and their appointment approved by the Senior Pro-Vice-Chancellor on behalf of the Senate.

5.5.2 The candidate's submission will be submitted to the two external examiners for assessment. In order to encourage independent assessment, neither examiner shall be told the identity of the other examiner.

5.5.3 Each examiner shall make an independent report to the Senate on the candidate's submission for the degree and make separately to the Senate a clear recommendation whether or not the degree should be awarded.

5.5.4 If the examiners' reports both recommend the award of the degree, the recommendations will go forward to the Senate.

5.5.5 If neither of the examiners recommend the award of the degree, no award shall be made.

5.5.6 If only one of the two examiners recommends the award of the degree, the sub-group may recommend the appointment by the Senate of an External Referee Examiner, who will be asked to provide an independent report and recommendation on the submission.

5.5.7 If the External Referee Examiner recommends that an award should be made, the Senate may at its discretion, approve an award.

5.5.8 No award shall be made if fewer than two of the three examiners recommend

that the candidate should be admitted to the degree.

5.6 Submission after Award

5.6.1 If an award is recommended to the Senate, the candidate shall supply two copies of the material submitted for the award to the Secretary of the Graduate School Management Committee, permanently bound as described in the General Regulations for the Presentation of Theses.

5.6.2 The University Department of Library and Information Services and the Associate Dean Research in the relevant School shall each retain one copy of the work approved for the award of the degree.

5.7 Unsuccessful Candidates

5.7.1 In the event of the Doctor of Science not being awarded, the University will retain one copy of the submission and the other copy will be returned to the candidate.

5.7.2 A candidate whose submission for the degree is unsuccessful may be permitted to resubmit a revised set of published work not less than three years after the date of the previous submission. Resubmissions will be considered afresh on their own merit and should be discussed with the relevant School in the first instance.