

## Education Committee

Approved by the Graduate Panel of Education Committee on 26 June 2015

## General Regulations for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

**Brief note about nature of change:**

Changes to the regulations clarifying the role of the supervisor in the transfer and confirmation of status assessment process, and making it mandatory to hold an interview for confirmation of status assessments.

With effect from Michaelmas term 2016

**Location of change**

In *Examination Regulations* online

**Detail of change**

Citation number [1.10]

**§3. Admission of Candidates to the Status of Student for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

1. Candidates qualified under §2 of this section may apply for admission as Student for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy to the board concerned through the Registrar. Such applications shall be accompanied by:

(i) a statement from the supervisor ~~that he or she approves the proposed subject for a thesis and considers the candidate well-fitted to undertake advanced research~~ containing their view of the proposed subject for a thesis and of the readiness of the candidate to undertake advanced research. A supervisor may delay an early application in the interests of the student, but must enable students to apply for their assessment within the prescribed time limits;

(ii) a statement of support for the application from the candidate's society;

(iii) a statement of the subject of the proposed thesis and details of the manner in which the candidate proposes to treat it.

2. Save for those applying under the provisions of § 2, cl. 1 (ii) of this section, applicants shall in addition be required to submit written work to the board, which work shall be assessed by two assessors appointed by the board, neither of whom shall normally be the candidate's supervisor. The precise manner and form of the written work shall be determined by regulation by each board. In the case of Fine Art candidates offering studio practice, and in the case of Music candidates offering a portfolio of musical compositions as part of their submissions, this will include such studio or compositional work as the board requires. The process of assessment must always include an interview with the applicant. Upon completion of their assessment of the candidate's work, the assessors shall make a recommendation as to whether the application for transfer to D.Phil. status should be granted. In each case the assessors shall make a reasoned written report to the board in support of their recommendation.

3. The board shall consider the candidate's application together with the material supplied in accordance with clauses 1 and 2 above. No application for transfer shall be granted unless the assessors shall have certified and the board is satisfied that the candidate is capable of carrying out advanced research, and that the subject of the thesis and the manner of its treatment proposed by the candidate are acceptable; and unless the board or department under whose aegis the research is to be conducted has adequate facilities to enable the research to be undertaken.

4. Subject to the approval of the Education Committee, each board shall have power to determine by regulation what other test or condition, if any, it may require before approving admission to D.Phil. status. Each board shall be empowered, without further authority, to require from the supervisor any further confidential report on an applicant's suitability to pursue research towards the D.Phil.

5. It shall be the duty of the Registrar to submit any application made under these provisions to the board concerned, and to inform the candidate of the outcome as soon as may be.

6. A candidate whose first application for transfer to D.Phil. status is not approved shall be permitted to make one further application, following the procedures laid down in clauses 1-4 above, and shall be granted an extension of time for one term if this is necessary for the purposes of making the application.

7. An applicant who transfers to the status of Student for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy shall be reckoned as having held that status from the time he or she was admitted to his or her previous status unless the board shall determine otherwise.

#### **§4. Confirmation of Status as a Student for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

1. A candidate who has been admitted to the status of Student for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy must, not later than the ninth term or normally earlier than the sixth term after that in which he or she was initially admitted to the status of a Probationer Research Student or to the status of a student for another higher degree of the University, or the eighteenth and twelfth terms respectively in the case of a part-time student, apply to the faculty board or committee concerned for confirmation of his or her status as a D.Phil. Student. A board or committee may, for good reason, permit a candidate to defer for a maximum of three terms his or her application for confirmation of status. A student who has been admitted to the status of Student for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy after successfully completing the requirements for the Degree of Master (or Bachelor) of Philosophy, or having held the status of Student for the M.Litt. or M.Sc. by Research, may be exempted by the board or committee concerned from the requirement for confirmation of

status. With the exception of students who have been exempted under this provision, all Students for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy must have their status confirmed before making an application for the appointment of examiners.

2. Candidates applying for confirmation of their status shall submit their application to the board concerned, through the Registrar; and such applications shall be accompanied by:

(i) ~~certification from the supervisor that the candidate's progress has been such as to warrant confirmation of status~~ a statement from the supervisor containing their view of the candidate's progress towards confirmation of status. A supervisor may delay an early application in the interests of the student, but must enable students to apply for their assessment within the prescribed time limits;

(ii) a statement of support for the application from the candidate's society.

3. Each faculty board shall, subject to the approval of the Education Committee, determine by regulation any other conditions which a student must fulfil before his or her status may be confirmed. The process of assessment must always include an interview with the candidate.

#### **Explanatory Notes**

In response to recommendations by the Proctors, in Trinity term 2015 Graduate Panel approved a number of changes to regulations and policy aimed at clarifying and improving the assessment process for transfer and confirmation of status. In particular, the Panel endorsed the proposal that the assessment of a student should be independent of the supervisor, and agreed to remove the requirement for the supervisor to endorse the student's application for transfer or confirmation and to provide instead a statement containing their view of the candidate's progress and readiness for assessment, a statement which would not be available to the assessors. The Panel also agreed to make it mandatory to hold an interview for confirmation of status assessments. These changes to regulation are accompanied by more detailed changes to the *Policy on Research Degrees*.