

Research Degrees Panel of Education Committee

Approved in principle at the meeting of Research Degrees Panel on 26 February 2019
with exact wording approved by the chair on 5 September 2019

General Regulations Governing Research Degrees

Brief note about nature of change: introduction of electronic submission of theses as official submission copy

Location of change

In *Examination Regulations 2018*, <http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/examregs/2018-19/grgoveresedegr/> as amended by the Gazette notice of 25 July 2019.

Effective date

For all students submitting their thesis from MT 2019

Detail of change

Amend section 7 (cit. ref. 1.89-1.117 and 1.122-1.123) as indicated, new text underlined, deleted text struck through.

2. Preparation and submission of theses for the Degrees of M.Litt., M.Sc. by Research, and D.Phil.

(i) ~~Text and footnotes~~

~~Candidates should note that the purpose of these regulations is not only to ease the task of the examiners (which is obviously in the candidates' interests), but also to ensure that the copy finally deposited in the Bodleian or other university library is of a standard of legibility which will allow it (subject to applicable copyright rules) to be photocopied or microfilmed if required in future years.~~

~~The thesis must be printed or typed with a margin of 3 to 3.5 cm on the left hand edge of each page (or on the inner edge, whether left hand or right hand, in the case of a thesis which is printed on both sides of the paper). Theses in typescript should present the main text in double spacing with quotations and footnotes in single spacing. In the case of word-processed or printed theses, where the output resembles that of a~~

typewriter, double spacing should be taken to mean a distance of about 0.33 inch or 8 mm between successive lines of text. Candidates are advised that it is their responsibility to ensure that the print of their thesis is of an adequate definition and standard of legibility.

Footnotes should normally be placed at the bottom of each page. Where they are given at the end of each chapter or at the end of the thesis, two separate unbound copies of footnotes should also be presented, for the convenience of the examiners.

Candidates should carefully note the regulations concerning word limits which individual boards have made. In such cases, candidates should state the approximate number of words in their theses.

Theses must be submitted in English unless for exceptional reasons a board otherwise determines in the term in which the candidate is first admitted as a research student.

The pages of the thesis must be numbered. Each copy should have an abstract included (see below).

(ii) Proof-reading

Work submitted for examination must be solely the work of the candidate, except where otherwise clearly indicated. It is not permitted for a student to ask or allow someone else to make material changes to their work, for example, by rewriting passages of text or rewriting formulae or code. Failure to adhere to these regulations could constitute a breach of academic integrity and contravene the Proctors' Disciplinary Regulations for Candidates in Examination.

Candidates are responsible for the proof-reading of their work. Proof-reading by a third party is acceptable provided it constitutes no more than advice on the following: spelling and punctuation, formatting, grammar and syntax. A third party may not be used to change the text of the thesis so as to clarify, develop or change the ideas and arguments, reduce the length of the thesis, provide help with referencing, correct information within the thesis, or translate the thesis into English.

(iii) Examiners' copies: binding and presentation

At the time of their examination, candidates must submit two copies of their thesis, which must be securely and firmly bound in either hard or soft covers. Loose-leaf binding is not acceptable. Candidates are responsible for ensuring that examiners' copies are securely bound and should note that theses which do not meet this requirement will not be accepted.

Fine Art candidates offering studio practice as part of their submission must submit, together with the written portion of their thesis, documentation in appropriate form of the exhibition or portfolio of works to be examined. Wherever possible, this documentation should be bound with the written portion of the thesis.

Candidates should pack each copy of the thesis intended for the examiners into a separate but unsealed parcel or padded envelope, ready in all respects, except the address, to be posted to the examiners when appointed. Each parcel should bear the

candidate's name and society and the words 'M.LITT./M.SC./D.PHIL. (as appropriate) THESIS AND ABSTRACT' in BLOCK CAPITALS in the bottom left-hand corner. A slip giving the address to which the examiners should write in order to contact the candidate about arrangements for the oral examination should be enclosed with each copy of the thesis. Candidates are responsible for ensuring that their examiners have no difficulty in communicating with them. The separate copies thus packed should be submitted to the Examination Schools, High Street, Oxford. If sent or posted they should be enclosed in one covering parcel.

The theses of candidates who fail to follow this advice are liable to delay in being forwarded to the examiners.

(iv) Date of submission of examiners' copies

Candidates may submit the examiners' copies of their thesis, prepared as described above, at the same time as they apply for the appointment of their examiners. If they intend, however, to submit the examiners' copies at a later date, they will be required to state, at the time of their application for appointment of examiners, the date by which they will submit. This should be as soon as possible after the date of application and may in no case be later than the last day of the vacation immediately following the term in which application for the appointment of examiners has been made.

(v) Library copies: binding and presentation

Once the board has granted a candidate leave to supplicate, he or she must submit a finalised copy of the thesis, as approved by the examiners, to the Examination Schools for deposit in the relevant university library. [For candidates admitted on or after 1 October 2007: The candidate must also submit an electronic copy to the Oxford Research Archive. (Candidates whose thesis has been prepared in non-standard media such as to make electronic submission impracticable may apply to the Proctors for exemption from this requirement.)] These should incorporate any corrections or amendments which the examiners may have requested of the candidate. The examiners must confirm in writing in their report to the board that any corrections required have been made.

The library copy of the thesis must be in a permanently fixed binding, drilled and sewn, in a stiff board case in library buckram, in a dark colour, and lettered on the spine with the candidate's name and initials, the degree, and the year of submission.

Fine Art candidates offering studio practice as part of their submission must submit the written portion of their thesis together with documentation in appropriate form of their exhibition or portfolio of works. Wherever possible, this documentation should be bound with the written portion of the thesis.

Candidates should note that leave to supplicate is conditional upon receipt by the Examination Schools of the library copy of their thesis and [for candidates admitted on or after 1 October 2007, receipt by the Oxford Research Archive of an electronic copy and [for candidates supplicating on or after 1 July 2013] receipt by the Examination Schools of the library copy of the thesis and receipt by the Oxford Research Archive of the electronic copy of the thesis no later than by the end of the fifth day before the date

of the degree ceremony booked by the candidate for conferral of their degree and that candidates may not proceed to take their degree until they have fulfilled the requirement [by the stipulated deadline for those supplicating on or after 1 July 2013] to submit a library copy of the thesis and [for candidates admitted on or after 1 October 2007]: an electronic copy (unless an exception to the requirement to submit an electronic copy of the thesis has been granted by the Proctors)].

(vi) Dispensation from Consultation of Thesis (D.Phil, M.Litt. M.Sc. by Research)

A candidate may apply to the relevant board for dispensation from consultation of thesis for all or part(s) of the hard copy and/or digital version of his or her thesis if a good reason is presented. Applications should be submitted to the relevant board and should be supported by the student's supervisor. If dispensation from consultation is granted, access to the hard copy and/or digital thesis will be restricted from the date of deposit, and will not be made available for consultation until the approved end date.

In exceptional circumstances, a candidate's supervisor may apply to the relevant board for dispensation from consultation of thesis, or an extension to an existing dispensation from consultation. Every effort should first be made to consult the candidate on the proposed application. The board has the power to grant the supervisor's request provided it is satisfied that the request is appropriate and relevant.

(vii) Abstracts

The abstract of the thesis should concisely summarize its scope and principal arguments, in about 300 words. It should be printed or typewritten, on one side only, of A4-sized paper. Each copy of the abstract should be headed with the title of the thesis, the name and college of the candidate, the degree for which it is submitted, and the term and year of submission.

One copy of the abstract prepared at the time of the examination should be bound into each of the examiners' copies of the thesis. Subsequently, when the examination is completed, candidates should also arrange for a copy of the abstract to be bound into the library copy of their thesis, and should submit with the library copy a separate, unbound copy of their abstract which may be despatched to ASLIB and published. The copy of the abstract which is earmarked for dispatch to ASLIB should be presented separately in a form suitable for microfilming, i.e. it should be (1) on one side of a single sheet of A4 paper, (2) a typed, single-spaced top copy, a clear photocopy, or a printed copy (i.e. it should not be a carbon or poor photocopy), and (3) headed up with name, college, year and term of submission, and the title of the thesis.

It should be noted that some boards have made regulations requiring the submission of more detailed abstracts in addition to the general requirement of an abstract not normally exceeding 300 words.

(i) Text and footnotes

Candidates should note that the purpose of these regulations is not only to ease the task of the examiners (which is obviously in the candidates' interests), but also to ensure that the copy finally deposited in the Bodleian or other university library is of a

standard of legibility which will allow it (subject to applicable copyright rules) to be photocopied or microfilmed if required in future years.

The thesis must be word-processed with a margin of 3 to 3.5 cm on the left-hand edge of each page. The main text should be double-spaced with quotations and footnotes in single spacing. Double spacing should be taken to mean a distance of about 0.33 inch or 8 mm between successive lines of text. Text should be typed using an easily readable font, with a minimum font size of 11 pt. Footnotes should be font size 10 pt.

Footnotes should normally be placed at the bottom of each page. Where they are given at the end of each chapter or at the end of the thesis, a separate pdf of footnotes should be uploaded to the Research Digital Thesis Submissions (RTDS) application under "Additional Materials", for the convenience of the examiners.

Candidates should carefully note the regulations concerning word limits which individual boards have made. In such cases, candidates should state the approximate number of words in their thesis.

Theses must be submitted in English unless for exceptional reasons a board otherwise determines in the term in which the candidate is first admitted as a research student.

The thesis must have an abstract included (see vii below), and the pages of the thesis must be numbered.

(ii) Proof-reading

Work submitted for examination must be solely the work of the candidate, except where otherwise clearly indicated. It is not permitted for a student to ask or allow someone else to make material changes to their work, for example, by rewriting passages of text or rewriting formulae or code. Failure to adhere to these regulations could constitute a breach of academic integrity and contravene the Proctors' Disciplinary Regulations for Candidates in Examination.

Candidates are responsible for the proof-reading of their work. Proof-reading by a third party is acceptable provided it constitutes no more than advice on the following: spelling and punctuation, formatting, grammar and syntax. A third party may not be used to change the text of the thesis so as to clarify, develop or change the ideas and arguments, reduce the length of the thesis, provide help with referencing, correct information within the thesis, or translate the thesis into English.

(iii) Examiners' copies

At the time of their examination, candidates must submit a digital pdf copy of their thesis via RTDS. Additional materials (footnotes, appendices, image files, etc.) should be saved within a single zip file and uploaded at the same time. The thesis may be subject to scanning by text-matching software.

Fine Art candidates offering studio practice as part of their submission must submit, together with the written portion of their thesis, documentation in appropriate form of the exhibition or portfolio of works to be examined. Wherever possible, this documentation should be contained within the written portion of the thesis but can be uploaded as a

separate file under "Additional Materials" if necessary. Where this is not possible, two copies of additional items should be submitted to the Research Degrees Team, Examination Schools, High Street, Oxford OX1 4BG.

Candidates are responsible for ensuring that their examiners have no difficulty in communicating with them. Any change in address or contact details since application for the appointment of examiners must be notified immediately to the Research Degrees Team (researchdegrees@admin.ox.ac.uk).

Examiners may request a soft-bound copy of the thesis from the Research Degrees Team.

(iv) Date of submission of examiners' copies

Candidates may submit the digital examination copy of their thesis, prepared as described above, at the same time as they apply for the appointment of their examiners. If they intend, however, to submit the examiners' copy at a later date, they will be required to state, at the time of their application for appointment of examiners, the date by which they will submit. This should be as soon as possible after the date of application and may in no case be later than the last day of the vacation immediately following the term in which application for the appointment of examiners has been made.

(v) Library copies: binding and presentation

Once the board has granted a candidate leave to supplicate, they must submit a finalised copy of the thesis, as approved by the examiners, to the Examination Schools for deposit in the relevant university library. The candidate must also submit an electronic copy of this finalised thesis to the Oxford Research Archive. These should incorporate any corrections or amendments which the examiners may have requested of the candidate. The examiners must confirm in writing in their report to the board that any corrections required have been made.

The library copy of the thesis must be in a permanently fixed binding, drilled and sewn, in a stiff board case in library buckram, in a dark colour, and lettered on the spine with the candidate's name and initials, the degree, and the year of submission.

Fine Art candidates offering studio practice as part of their submission must submit the written portion of their thesis together with documentation in appropriate form of their exhibition or portfolio of works. Wherever possible, this documentation should be bound with the written portion of the thesis.

Candidates should note that leave to supplicate is conditional upon receipt by Student Registry of the library copy of the thesis and receipt by the Oxford Research Archive of the electronic copy of this finalised thesis no later than by the end of the fifth day before the date of the degree ceremony booked by the candidate for conferral of their degree. Candidates may not proceed to take their degree until they have fulfilled this requirement.

(vi) Dispensation from Consultation of Thesis (D.Phil, M.Litt. M.Sc. by Research)

A candidate may apply to the relevant board for dispensation from consultation of thesis for all or part(s) of the hard copy and/or digital version of their thesis if a good reason is presented. Applications should be submitted to the relevant board and should be supported by the student's supervisor. If dispensation from consultation is granted, access to the hard copy and/or digital thesis will be restricted from the date of deposit, and will not be made available for consultation until the approved end date.

In exceptional circumstances, a candidate's supervisor may apply to the relevant board for dispensation from consultation of thesis, or an extension to an existing dispensation from consultation. Every effort should first be made to consult the candidate on the proposed application. The board has the power to grant the supervisor's request provided it is satisfied that the request is appropriate and relevant.

(vii) Abstracts

The abstract of the thesis should concisely summarise its scope and principal arguments, in about 300 words. It should be placed within the thesis, generally immediately following the Table of Contents. When the examination is completed, the abstract should be included in the library copy of their thesis.

It should be noted that some boards have made regulations requiring the submission of more detailed abstracts in addition to the general requirement of an abstract not normally exceeding 300 words.

3. Conduct of Oral Examinations for the Degrees of M.Litt., M.Sc. by Research, and D.Phil.

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(v) Candidates may apply to the board concerned for the oral examination to be held not later than a certain date, provided that this date shall not be earlier than ~~one calendar month~~ four weeks after the date on which ~~the thesis has been received at the Examination Schools~~ the thesis was uploaded to RTDS or after the date on which the examiners have formally agreed to act, whichever is the later. If the board is satisfied that there are special circumstances justifying this application, it will ask the examiners to make arrangements to enable the oral examination to be held within the period specified. In such cases the examiners, when invited to act, will be informed that the candidate has asked that the oral examination should be held not later than a certain date, and acceptance of the invitation to examine will be on the understanding that they would seek to meet this request. If it is not practicable to meet the student's request, then the board shall decide how to proceed.

If, for any reason, examiners wish to hold a viva within ~~one calendar month~~ four weeks of receiving their copy of the thesis, notification should be sent to the relevant board, and the permission of the Proctors must be sought. This may be done by contacting the Proctors' Office giving details of the proposed arrangement and the reasons for the request. Under no circumstances will a viva be permitted to take place within 14 days of receipt of the thesis by the examiners.

Explanatory Notes

At its meeting in Hilary term 2019, Research Degrees Panel agreed that all research degrees theses should be submitted electronically rather than in hard copy with effect from all students submitting for examination for the first time in Michaelmas term 2019 or later. These regulation changes bring into effect that decision.