

Research Degrees Panel of Education Committee

Approved at the meeting of Research Degrees Panel on 9 June 2020

General Regulations for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Brief note about nature of change: changes to devolve various decisions relating to the conduct of research degree vivas/milestone assessments to the relevant board, removing the requirement for Proctorial permission.

Location of change

In *Examination Regulations 2019*,
<https://examregs.admin.ox.ac.uk/Regulation?code=grftdodoctofphil>

Effective date

For all students from Michaelmas term 2020 onwards

Detail of change

Amend section §3 (insert after cit. ref. 1.23) as indicated, new text underlined.

8. The interview required under cl.2 of this section shall be held in Oxford in a suitable university or college building, unless in exceptional circumstances the board concerned gives special permission for it to be held at some other place. Such permission shall only be granted where the applicant and both the assessors have agreed in writing to the proposed arrangements.

9. In exceptional circumstances, application may be made to the relevant board for special permission to hold the interview required under cl.2 of this section using audiovisual electronic communication. Special permission may be granted for any or all of the applicant and assessors to take part in the interview using audiovisual electronic communication. The board concerned may approve the application where:

(i) it accepts that no alternative and timely arrangements may reasonably be put in place;

(ii) the proposed arrangements are acceptable to both assessors and to the applicant, all of whom have agreed to them in writing;

(iii) it is content to bear the additional cost of the necessary arrangements;

(iv) the interview takes place according to the protocol approved by the Education Committee;

(v) in the event of any technical or other problems, the validity of the process used to conduct the interview and to determine the outcome will be decided by the Proctors.

Amend section §4 (insert after cit. ref. 1.31) as indicated, new text underlined.

7. The interview required under cl.3 of this section shall be held in Oxford in a suitable university or college building, unless in exceptional circumstances the board concerned gives special permission for it to be held at some other place. Such permission shall only be granted where the candidate and the assessors have agreed in writing to the proposed arrangements.

8. In exceptional circumstances, application may be made to the relevant board for special permission to hold the interview required under cl.3 of this section using audiovisual electronic communication. Special permission may be granted for any or all of the candidate and assessors to take part in the interview using audiovisual electronic communication. The board concerned may approve the application where:

(i) it accepts that no alternative and timely arrangements may reasonably be put in place;

(ii) the proposed arrangements are acceptable to the assessors and to the candidate, all of whom have agreed to them in writing;

(iii) it is content to bear the additional cost of the necessary arrangements;

(iv) the interview takes place according to the protocol approved by the Education Committee;

(v) in the event of any technical or other problems, the validity of the process used to conduct the interview and to determine the outcome will be decided by the Proctors.

Amend section §7 (cit. ref. 1.74) as indicated, deleted text struck through.

The Education Committee shall have power to make regulations concerning the notice to be given of the oral examination, and of the time and place at which it may be held. ~~The examination may be attended by any member of the University in academic dress, while non-members may attend only with the consent of the examiners. In the case of theses submitted to the Social Sciences, Mathematical, Physical and Life Sciences, and Medical~~

~~Sciences Boards, the Proctors after consultation with the relevant Divisional Board may decide (either at their own discretion or at the request of the candidate or the supervisor or department) to forbid the attendance of any person or all persons (other than the examiners and the candidate) or to impose any condition on attendance if and to the extent that such action is in their view necessary to protect the interests of the University or the candidate or both, and the examiners shall be informed accordingly and shall include this information in the notice of examination. The student, or their college, may within fourteen days of the date of the Proctors' decision appeal in writing to the Chair of the Education Committee (who may nominate another member of the committee, other than one of the Proctors, to adjudicate the appeal).~~

Explanatory Notes

At its meeting in Hilary term 2020, Research Degrees Panel of Education Committee agreed that a number of decisions relating to the conduct of research degree vivas/milestone assessments should no longer require Proctorial permission, and that decisions should be devolved to the relevant board. At its meeting in Trinity term 2020, the Panel approved changes to regulations to implement its decision.