

Changes in Examination Regulations to the University Gazette – Social Sciences Division

SSD/2/2/4

Social Sciences Divisional Board

Approved by officer's action on behalf of Quality Assurance Committee on 1 October 2024

Title of Programme

Research Degrees in Education

Brief note about nature of change:

Changes to reflect the on-course milestone application submission through Student Self Service.

Effective date

For all students on course from Michaelmas term 2024

Location of change

In *Examination Regulations* [2024-25, Research Degrees in Education \(ox.ac.uk\)](#)

Details of Change:

Amend citations as follows:

1.11. Admission

^{1.2}All students (whether studying on a full or part-time basis) are normally admitted as Probationer Research Students.

^{1.3}In assessing applications from candidates seeking to undertake a research degree through part-time study, the Department shall have regard to evidence that:

^{1.4}(i) the candidate has normally a minimum of three years' experience as a professional in education (broadly defined);

^{1.5}(ii) the candidate can meet the attendance requirements relating to part-time study

^{1.6}(iii) the candidate has the written support of their present employer for their proposed course of study and its obligations;

1.7(iv) the candidate's proposed topic of research is related to their present or intended professional work (broadly defined).

1.8 *Attendance requirements (for part-time students)*

1.9 Part-time research students are required to attend for a minimum of thirty days of university-based work each year, to be arranged with the agreement of their supervisor, for the period that their names remain on the Register of Graduate Students unless individually dispensed by the Department's Departmental Board.

1.10 2. Candidates with Probationer Research Student status, unless or until they have entered upon another status, or have been otherwise dispensed from some or all of the following requirements by the Director of Doctoral Research, are required to undertake the work set out below during the first year.

1.11 A first year student shall be expected to satisfactorily complete a course of lectures, seminars and classes, as set out on the pages of Canvas and in agreement with the Director of Doctoral Research.

1.12 **3. Transfer from Probationer Research Student status to D.Phil. status**

1.13 This transfer shall normally take place not later than the fourth term after admission as a Probationer Research Student (sixth term for part-time students). The student will be required to show that the research already accomplished shows promise of the ability to produce a satisfactory D.Phil thesis on the intended topic. For this purpose the student must submit, via Student Self Service, ~~to the Academic Administration Office of the Department of Education~~ a word-processed, copy of a substantial piece of written work as follows:

1.14 The submission must include:

1.15 (i) A current thesis title

1.16 (ii) Current thesis abstract: max 400 words;

1.17 (iii) A document of up to 10,000 words that includes a background to the proposed research, including a review of the relevant literature and theoretical perspectives; the conceptual framework and rationale informing the research design; key research questions; and a reflective discussion of methods, access, research ethics and analysis. The Transfer document should provide evidence of a convincing and realistic research design; this may include a discussion of the pilot study. It should also highlight potential challenges or difficulties that may be encountered.

1.18 (iv) CUREC form(s) as required and clear evidence of how commitment to responsible (ethical) conduct of research will be realised

1.19 (v) Risk assessment form including evidence that the student has considered carefully issues of safety in fieldwork

1.20(vi) A clear timetable for the research which demonstrates that the project is feasible and practicable and can be completed within the timeframe of 3 years

1.21(vii) A list of references

1.22(viii) Evidence of presentation of work at a seminar (e.g. RTS, Work in Progress, Research Group Seminar, STORIES Conference etc.)

1.23(ix) A Skills Review and Training Analysis

1.24 In consultation with the student and supervisor, the Director of Doctoral Research acting on behalf of the Academic Committee shall appoint two assessors who will interview the student and make a recommendation to the committee in an agreed written report. Supervisors may be present at interview in a non-participatory capacity with the direct agreement of the student. Candidates seeking to transfer to D.Phil. Status will be expected during the interview to show evidence of research training through successful completion of the requirements of the Department's educational research methods course, unless specifically exempted by the Director of Doctoral Research from all or part of it. A candidate whose first application for transfer to D.Phil. status is unsuccessful shall be permitted to make one further application to apply for transfer within one term. Those students who fail at the second attempt may be approved for transfer to M.Litt. status, or transfer to M.Sc. by Research status.

1.25 **4. Confirmation of Status**

1.26 Confirmation of Status shall normally take place not later than the seventh term after admission as a Probationer Research Student (fourteenth term for part-time students). It is intended to be a comprehensive monitoring of progress towards the final thesis. At this stage a student may apply to submit an integrated thesis, prior to applying for confirmation of status. See *Section 5 Integrated Thesis*.

1.27 Students' application for Confirmation of Status will be examined by two assessors appointed for this purpose. Supervisors may be present at interview in a non-participatory capacity with the direct agreement of the student. The student must submit, **via Student Self Service**, ~~to the Academic Administration Office of the Department of Education~~ a word-processed copy of a substantial piece of written work as follows:

1.28(i) Current Thesis Title.

1.29(ii) Thesis Abstract (up to 300 words).

1.30(iii) Proposed Thesis table of contents (indicating progress on each chapter).

1.31(iv) A draft Introduction to the thesis, setting out the overall argument and/or contribution of the thesis. The introduction should also describe the proposed contents of each chapter or each article manuscript, explaining how they link together and develop the thesis. These statements should normally be up to 500 words for each chapter or article manuscript. An extended literature review (but not the full chapter) can be submitted as Appendix A (This is important if

neither of your Confirmation of Status assessors were your Transfer of Status assessors).

1.32(v) One fully developed methods chapter that documents how the research questions were addressed in practice (for an articles-based thesis, the methods chapter should demonstrate how each of the article manuscripts contributes to the research questions), and reflects on how the initial research designs were refined or developed in the field.

1.33(vi) Either:

1.34 For a conventional thesis, one draft Findings chapter. This should show how the research questions are being addressed and describe the emergent findings.

1.35 Or

1.36 For an integrated thesis, one article manuscript of such quality that is suitable for submission to a peer-reviewed journal, submitted for consideration, under review, being revised, accepted for publication, or published. This article manuscript should show how the research questions are being addressed and describe the emergent findings.

1.37(vii) A list of references for the confirmation document.

1.38(viii) A list of references being used in the thesis more broadly.

1.39(xi) A clear assessment of progress made, and a timetable leading up to thesis submission.

1.40 The Confirmation submission should be up to 30,000 words (not including abstract, references or Appendix A). Further supporting materials can be provided in appendices, for the examiners to consult if they so wish (not counted in the word limit).

1.41 Candidates whose first application for confirmation of status is not approved shall be permitted to make one further application within one term.

1.42 **5. Thesis**

1.43 Theses submitted for the degree of D.Phil. should build on and develop the material submitted for Transfer of Status and Confirmation of Status.

1.44 A thesis for the Degree of M.Sc. by Research which exceeds 30,000 words, or a thesis for the Degree of M.Litt. which exceeds 50,000 words, or a thesis for the Degree of D.Phil. which exceeds 100,000 words, in each case including footnotes/endnotes but excluding appendices and references or bibliography, is liable to be rejected by the board unless the candidate has, with the support of his or her supervisor, secured the leave of the Department's Departmental Board to exceed this limit.

1.45 *Integrated thesis*

1.46 A DPhil thesis may be accepted for examination if it consists of a minimum of three article manuscripts of publishable quality. Such a body of work shall be deemed acceptable provided it represents a coherent and focused body of research. It should include an Introduction, a Literature Survey (either written as a stand-alone chapter or divided among the constituent chapters), a Methods chapter (to cover the whole thesis or to complement the methods sections in the articles, as appropriate), and a Discussion and/or Conclusion as relevant.

1.47 A DPhil thesis submitted under this rubric may include co-authored manuscripts. Any co-authored articles must include a statement indicating the candidate's contribution to the article, and all co-authors should certify in writing to the Director of Doctoral Research (DDR), what part of the work represents that of the candidate. Articles or article manuscripts written in collaboration should not be included unless the greater part of the work is directly attributed to the candidate themselves, and the supervisor so certifies.

1.48 Requests to submit an integrated thesis should be made with the support of the student's supervisor(s) to the DDR prior to applying for Confirmation of Status (CoS). Applications to submit an integrated thesis will not be considered for students who have already passed their Confirmation of Status. Students who wish to change back to a monograph format are required to make this request in writing to the DDR prior to applying for their final thesis submission.

1.49 The standard word limit regulations apply for integrated theses.