University Handbook for Examiners of Research Degrees by Theses

Introduction

The University is, of course, responsible for the quality and standards of postgraduate research awards made in its name. The function of examiners is to assist the University to discharge that responsibility by ensuring that the standards of postgraduate research awards at Newcastle are at least comparable to those in similar subjects in other Universities in the UK. The University expects that examiners will be rigorous and fair and that they will follow good practice. By undertaking their duties in this way, examiners not only maintain standards at Newcastle but, of course, also act as effective gatekeepers for the research community of which they are a part by ensuring candidates meet the academic criteria for membership. This Handbook covers Doctoral and Master of Philosophy research degrees i.e. the degrees of MPhil, MD and PhD etc and focuses on the examination of the thesis. Additional guidance is provided in the appendices at the end of the Handbook for the examination of the Integrated PhD programmes, and professional and practice-based Doctorates in the Arts and Humanities and Engineering.

For further information on the Research Degree Examination procedure and forms see:
http://www.ncl.ac.uk/students/progress/staff-resources/pg-research/exam.htm

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1. The Nomination and Appointment of Examiners

1.1 Nomination of Examiners

Candidates for postgraduate research degrees must complete the minimum period of registration required for the award and formally submit the exact title of their thesis for approval to the relevant Dean of Postgraduate Studies, normally not less than three months before they intend to submit it.

At the same time as the title is submitted, the Head of School/Institute in which the candidate is studying will nominate examiners for the thesis, via ePortfolio. Heads of School/Institute will consult supervisors about nominations. In the case of student candidates, heads should nominate one external and one internal examiner who is not the candidate's supervisor. In exceptional cases where the University is unable to appoint an internal examiner, a second external examiner will be appointed.

When making nominations, Heads of School/Institute, in consultation with supervisors, will, take account of the criteria for the appointment of examiners in the University's Code of Practice for Research Degree Students http://www.ncl.ac.uk/students/progress/assets/documents/PGRCoP.pdf

They will also present evidence that nominees fulfil these criteria. e.g. a short CV and a list of recent publications,

1.2 Independent Chair (where required)

Where two external examiners are appointed, or where the internal examiner has no previous experience of examining doctoral degrees, the relevant Dean of Postgraduate Studies will also appoint an independent member of University staff who will chair the oral examination.

Where the relevant Dean of Postgraduate Studies has determined that an independent chair is required, normally the independent chair should be from outside the candidate's school/institute.

An Independent Chair makes sure the University's procedures with regard to the examination of research degrees are followed. They take no part in the assessment process, but ensure that the examination process is conducted fairly and equitably.

The Independent Chair will be present for the duration of the oral examination, normally including the pre-meeting and post oral discussions between examiners. An Independent Chair will not be required to take notes of the meeting for the external examiners, but will be required to provide a summary report on the conduct of the oral examination to the Graduate School Administrator following the oral examination.

1.3 Appointment of Examiners

Examiners are appointed by the relevant Dean of Postgraduate Studies on behalf of Senate. Following appointment examiners are sent:

- the terms and conditions of appointment, along with an abstract of the thesis to be examined
- the University's *Handbook for Examiners of Research Degrees*
- a copy of the work submitted by the candidate in fulfilment of the requirements for the award
- a copy of the University's Regulations and Examination Conventions governing the relevant research degree
- Information about the programme, if relevant

- examination report forms

2. Duties of Examiners of Research Degrees by Theses

The core duties of examiners for research degrees are:

- carefully to consider the written work submitted by candidates
- to arrive at an independent evaluation of whether the work submitted meets the standards of the award and, if not, in which aspects it is deficient
- to write an independent preliminary report and send it to the Graduate School Administrator for forwarding to the relevant Dean of Postgraduate Studies, in advance of the oral examination taking place (where one is required)
- to consult with the co-examiner and compare independent preliminary reports, after both independent reports have been submitted to the Graduate School Administrator
- in the case of the MPhil research degree where oral examinations are optional, to decide if it is appropriate to use this means of determining a candidate's suitability for the award
- to agree with the supervisor a date and time for the oral examination
- to prepare for the oral examination in advance and compare independent preliminary reports with the co-examiner and agree an agenda for the examination
- to conduct the oral examination
- following examination of all written and, where appropriate, oral evidence, to decide whether the candidate has met the standards for the award
- to decide upon an appropriate recommendation to the relevant Dean of Postgraduate Studies (the full list of recommendations allowed under University regulations is set out later in this document)
- to complete a joint report form with the co- examiner on the candidate's performance and submit it to the Graduate School Administrator.
- in all cases where the recommendation is that the thesis be revised before award or re-submission for the original or a lesser degree, to agree with the co-examiner a written statement providing a full list of the changes to be made and/or work to be undertaken. This forms part of the Examiners' Joint Report, which shall be formally forwarded to the candidate and the supervisory team by the relevant Graduate School Administrator.
- in the case of external examiners, to comment upon any aspects of a candidate's experience or the examination process which they have judged to be particularly good or which have raised problems. This should be forwarded to the Graduate School Administrator for forwarding to the relevant Dean of Postgraduate Studies.
- In exceptional circumstances, and two or more weeks in advance of a scheduled oral examination, if the external examiner is unequivocally of the view that the thesis is not worthy of defence without significant rework, the external examiner should contact the Graduate School Administrator. The relevant Dean of Postgraduate Studies shall then request independent preliminary reports from each examiner before determining whether it is appropriate for extraordinary arrangements to be put in place for the examiners to confer before the scheduled meeting. If approved by the relevant Dean of Postgraduate Studies, the examiners will be permitted to prepare a joint report giving the candidate the recommendation of resubmitting in

twelve months, with an oral examination at that time.

3. Examination Criteria

Doctoral Programmes

Doctoral degrees at Newcastle University are awarded to candidates that demonstrate:

- The ability to create and interpret new knowledge through original research and advanced scholarship;
- A systematic understanding of an existing body of knowledge that is at the forefront of an academic field;
- The ability to critically explore, evaluate and test their ideas, and those of others, and to relate them to a wider body of knowledge;
- A good understanding of the research techniques, methods or approaches adopted and applied in a field of enquiry;
- The ability to conceive and implement a project which demonstrates an understanding of how to conduct research at the forefront of a field;
- An ability to produce research material worthy of publication.

For examination of the Integrated PhD programmes, professional and practice-based Doctorates in the Arts and Humanities, please see the additional guidance at the end of the Handbook

MPhil programme

The Degree of Master of Philosophy (MPhil) is awarded to candidates displaying convincing evidence of the capacity to pursue research and scholarship and represent original work.

For the award of an MPhil degree the University requires:

- A systematic understanding of knowledge that is informed by work at the forefront of an academic field;
- An ability to evaluate and critically appraise current research and advanced scholarship, and some evidence of originality in the application of this work;
- An understanding and critical appreciation of the research techniques, methods or approaches adopted and applied in a field of enquiry;
- An ability to conceive and implement a research project which demonstrates an understanding of how to conduct research in a field.

Normally an MPhil thesis will be more focused or limited in scope than a doctoral degree, which will demonstrate greater depth of critical enquiry than the MPhil. Relative to the doctoral degree, the MPhil will have less emphasis on original work and it need not be worthy of publication.

All research degrees

For all research degrees, the University requires that work presented for examination should be:

- Authentic

The submission should be the candidate's own work and not plagiarized from the work of others, published or unpublished. All sources used should be appropriately

acknowledged using a recognized form of referencing

- Scholarly

The thesis should conform to the normal canons of scholarship, studying a topic in-depth, and displaying critical discrimination and a sense of proportion in evaluating evidence and the opinion of others. Sources should be cited accurately, consistently, and correctly in the text and in the bibliography.

- Professional

The thesis should demonstrate the author has acquired the skills of a professional researcher capable of conducting research in accordance with the ethical practices of their field, and that they possess a good understanding of their role in the wider research process. The author should also demonstrate the ability to exercise personal responsibility and initiative in complex and unpredictable professional research environments.

- Well-structured, written, and presented

The thesis should demonstrate skill in writing and presenting research similar to scholarly work in their field. It should be clearly structured and orderly in arrangement, and well-written and presented. Similarly, any composition, exhibition, artefact(s) or other products of practice arising from the research should be arranged and presented in an orderly and coherent way.

4. Good Practice in the Examination of Research Degrees by Theses

The purpose of this section is to outline good practice in the examination of research degrees by thesis.

4.1 Pre-examination

Before reading the work submitted, examiners should consider the criteria against which to evaluate theses outlined in section 3. Such criteria are relevant to both individual chapters, and the thesis as a whole.

4.2 Relating the examination criteria to chapters of the work

While research degrees vary between individual subjects the following provides a general guide outlining what to consider.

- The context

- ♦ that the research question(s) have been placed in their academic and, where appropriate, industrial or commercial contexts
- ♦ that, in the case of a thesis undertaken as part of a team project, the relationship of the research to the overall project is set out along with the contribution of the candidate relative to that of other team members

- The literature

- ♦ that the relevant literature or an appropriately justified section of it has been covered
- ♦ that the literature is reviewed in ways which are critical and analytical and not just descriptive
- ♦ that the thesis demonstrates clear mastery of the literature
- ♦ that explicit links are made between the literature and the topic of the thesis
- ♦ that there are explicit links between the literature and the design of the study
- ♦ that there is a summary of the literature in so far as it relates to the thesis topic

- Methodology/methods

- that there is an awareness of the range of methodologies/methods which have been or might be used to tackle the topic
- that there is adequate justification of the methodology(ies)/methods adopted for the research
- that the methodology/methods are related to the design of the research
- that practical problems and issues are identified and discussed
- where applicable, that ethical considerations are outlined and discussed
- where applicable, that matters of reliability and validity are identified and discussed

- Design of the study

- that the design of the study is appropriate to the topic
- that there is awareness of the limitations of the design adopted

- Substantive research

- that the research design has been properly implemented
- that the relevant sources of evidence have been explored

- Analysis

- that appropriate theoretical and, where applicable, empirical techniques are used to analyse evidence
- that the level and form of analysis is appropriate to the evidence

- Outcomes/Results

- that the outcomes/results identified relate to the topic
- that the outcomes/results are justified on the basis of the analysis of the evidence
- that the outcomes/results are presented clearly
- where applicable, that patterns and trends in the outcomes/results are accurately identified and summarized

- Discussion

- that the main points emerging from the outcomes/results have been picked up for discussion
- that there is an awareness of the limitations of the outcomes/results

- Conclusions

- that the conclusions relate to the initial focus of the study
- that the conclusions drawn are justified by the study
- that the implications of the conclusions for the field of knowledge have been identified

4.3 Examination of Written Work

While it is good practice for all examiners to have the examination criteria in mind prior to reading the thesis, it is recognized that different examiners may adopt different approaches to reading the work. What follows below are suggestions which will assist those new to examining.

- **Start by gaining an overall impression of the substance of the thesis or dissertation**

  Examiners can start by reading the full title, the abstract, and the introduction and

then turn to the final chapter(s) to see what conclusions were reached. This should enable them to gain an overall impression of what the thesis is about and what has come out of it.

- **Reflect on and relate the examination criteria to sections of the thesis**

  Examiners may then reflect and consider how the criteria relating to the thesis (section 3 above) might be applied to the topic in question, e.g. the literature the candidate might be expected to have read, which methods would be appropriate, etc. etc. By the end of this examiners should have effectively translated the examination criteria into a set of clearly-defined questions to be asked of the specific piece of work before them. In addition, their reflection may have led to new questions about the research.

- **Read and note**

  Examiners can then carefully read each chapter of the thesis or dissertation with the relevant questions in mind. They can note where questions have been answered satisfactorily, where clarification is needed, and where answers are not satisfactory. As, in the course of reading, additional questions occur, these may be noted and views recorded on how well the candidate has answered them in the present chapter or in subsequent ones.

- **Reflect and summarise**

  Examiners should now have a clear idea of how far each section of the thesis meets the relevant criteria. These may be summarized to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the thesis and to highlight issues where clarification is required

- **Consider whether the thesis meets the general criteria**

  In the process of reading the thesis section by section, examiners will have begun to formulate an impression of how it meets the more general criteria concerning authenticity, scholarship, and structure, presentation and citation (section 3 above). They may now consider how far the work meets these criteria and note where the work does fulfil them, where there is doubt, and where they are not met. This may involve re-reading all or part of the thesis and would normally include checking a sample of citations.

- **Consider whether the criteria for the award have been met**

  The last area for consideration is whether the thesis meets the award specific criteria. It can be helpful here for examiners to refresh their memory of the University's regulations, in particular in the case of the PhD to consider the definition of originality. Again examiners should note in what respects the thesis meets the criteria, where this is unclear, and where it does not meet them.

  If examiners follow the above, they should have notes on the extent to which the criteria are met for sections of the thesis, the latter as a whole, and in relation to the award. These notes should form a basis for writing a preliminary report.

4.4 The Preliminary Report

Examiners should then *independently* write a preliminary report, which will indicate their provisional assessment of the thesis and of the issues to be explored in the oral examination. The University recognises that these reports will vary considerably depending upon the discipline and the subject matter of the thesis. It would normally expect that, if the criteria have clearly been fully met, the report will normally be very

brief. On the other hand, if examiners have serious doubts or concerns about whether criteria have been met, a fuller account would be expected.

A copy of the preliminary report should be sent to the Graduate School Administrator in advance of the oral examination (normally two weeks) for forwarding to the relevant Dean of Postgraduate Studies. The preliminary report should not be shown to the candidate or supervisor.

4.5 Oral Examination

The purpose of the oral examination is to gather further evidence from the candidate about their suitability for the award, in particular:

- to ask the candidate to clarify issues relating to meeting criteria relating to specific parts of the thesis, to the thesis as a whole, and to the award
- to ascertain that the thesis is the candidate's own work, that he or she has developed research skills at this level, and that he or she understands the relationship of the thesis to the wider field of knowledge
- in cases where the thesis and/or the candidate for the award clearly does not meet the criteria, to find out the reasons. These may include the abilities of the candidate or other factors affecting the research, e.g. deficiencies in research training, the quality of supervision, the availability of resources, disruptions to the research process, or personal circumstances

4.6 Guidelines for an oral examination to be conducted by video link or equivalent audio visual service

It is expected that all oral examinations will take place with both the candidate and examiners present at the University unless specifically requested otherwise. Video link or an equivalent audio visual service may be used in exceptional circumstances where either the candidate or one of the examiners is not able to be present at the University.

In order for an oral examination to be conducted in this way approval must be sought from the dean of postgraduate studies and approval will only be given where the integrity of the examination can be guaranteed. The guidelines listed below must be adhered to.

- In all cases it should be voluntary for candidates to participate in oral examinations conducted in this way and written consent should be obtained from them (this consent could be in the form of an email).
- A member of the supervisory team or internal adviser is not normally expected to be present unless at the specific request of the candidate, but is expected to be available to be contacted by the examiners or candidate (after the examination) if required, for example by telephone.
- Any time difference between the two locations should be taken into account and the timing of the examination planned to ensure that the candidate is not disadvantaged in any way by it taking place at an inappropriate time.
- Guidance should be provided to those involved regarding how many hours both the facilities and the people involved (student, academic staff and technical staff) will be required for.
- Skype is not considered reliable enough or of high enough quality for use during an oral examination and high quality video conferencing facilities should be used. Advice on Videoconferencing facilities should be obtained from the IT Service

(http://www.ncl.ac.uk/itservice/videoconferencing/ Oral examinations can last for an entire day and therefore the technology needs to be able to facilitate this if necessary.

- Wherever possible the distance location used should belong to a 'trusted partner' e.g. the British Council.
- An opportunity should be provided in advance for those involved to trial the technology ahead of the examination.
- The examination should not be recorded.
- The candidate and examiners must be able to see each other at all times during the examination.
- Any materials brought into the examination by the candidate must be declared and be visible to the examiners at all times.
- An Independent Chair should be appointed to ensure that all parties are given sufficient opportunity to speak.
- Technical support should be available to those involved at all times.

4.7 Preparing for the Oral Examination

It is normally the supervisor who arranges the date, time and place of the oral examination. The supervisor should normally be available for consultation if necessary prior to and after the oral examination although they are not normally present (except in cases where the student has requested their presence but they will make no contribution to the examination).

Examiners should have a meeting, in strictest confidence and out of range of the candidate or other students, normally a couple of hours before the oral examination, to exchange and discuss preliminary reports. Examiners should then, bearing in mind each other's comments upon the written work, jointly determine:

- **the key issues to be raised with the candidate**

  These will be those identified in the initial reports where clarification is required or where criteria have not been met.

- **the order within which they are to be raised**

  In order to encourage candidates to talk, it can be helpful to raise relatively uncontroversial/factual issues at the start and then proceed to ones which are likely to be more difficult/conceptual when he or she is in the swing of things.

- **who will 'lead' on each issue**

  Examiners usually decide upon a division of labour based upon their expertise in the topic, with one leading on each issue and the other asking supplementary questions

  Normally, the external examiner chairs the proceedings and has overall responsibility for conducting the oral examination, unless an independent chair has been appointed.

4.8 Good practice in conducting the oral examination:

In the oral examination it is important to:

- **provide a quiet space for the candidate to prepare themselves for the oral examination**

  Candidates should be provided with a quiet space, out of range of any preliminary discussions between the examiners and/or supervisor.

- **ensure that the room is appropriately laid-out**

  The oral examination is a formal occasion, and the room should be appropriately laid out.

- **introduce the examiners to the candidate**

  It is courteous to the candidate for the chair of the examiners to introduce him- or herself and the other examiner(s) to the candidate.

- **explain the purpose of the oral examination to the candidate**

  It can be useful to explain to candidates that the purpose of the oral examination is to provide them with the opportunity to defend their thesis in high-level debate with experts drawn from the relevant research community

- **explain the process of the oral examination to the candidate**

  As many candidates will not have previously undertaken an oral examination, it is important to explain the process to them. This involves the examiners asking questions about their work and supplementary questions based upon their answers.

  The chair should make it clear that the examiners have a duty to thoroughly explore both the work presented and the candidate's knowledge and understanding of both it and the wider field and that persistent questioning is a normal and necessary part of the process.

  If he or she wishes, the chair should also say that no information about recommendations will be given until the examiners have conferred after the end of the oral examination but make it clear that this again is part of the process and that no inferences should be drawn.

  The candidate should also be told that he or she may, if they wish, consult with their copy of the thesis throughout the oral examination.

  Where an independent chair has been appointed they should make it clear that their role is to chair the oral examination, and to ensure the University's procedures with regard to the examination of research degrees are followed and that the examination process is conducted fairly and equitably. They take no part in the assessment process.

- **start the oral examination by commending the candidate**

  Candidates can be extremely nervous, and it is important to try and settle them down at the start of the oral examination by saying something commendatory but non-committal, e.g. 'We found your thesis very interesting', 'we particularly enjoyed...'.

- **question the candidate**

  Examiners should then start the questions. Normally, the external examiner begins the questions, and he or she should choose ones to start with which candidates should be able to answer without undue difficulty, e.g. why did you decide to do this topic?, what aspect of the work have you most enjoyed? Further questions should then be asked covering the key issues and in the order previously identified. In questioning the candidate, examiners should:

  - ask questions in a constructive and positive way

    Examiners should try to ask questions in ways that are constructive and positive rather than destructive and negative, e.g. 'why did you try to solve the problem using method X rather than method Y?' rather than 'Didn't you realise that you could have avoided these difficulties with method Y?'

- use an appropriate range of questioning techniques

  Questions may, as Murray (1998) has noted, be general ('How did you come to study this topic?'), open ('tell me about your methodology?) or closed ('why did you think that the confidence limits were unimportant in this case?).

  General or open ones are useful in encouraging the candidate to reflect upon their work, while closed ones lead to specific answers. Examiners should try to tailor the type of question to the type of answer required and, if possible, aim for a mix of general and open questions (which are harder to answer but can reveal much more about the candidate) and closed ones (which may reveal less but are easier for the candidate to answer).
- recognize that candidates may need time to answer

  Particularly when general or open questions are asked, candidates may need some time to gather their thoughts together and produce a coherent answer. Examiners need to recognize this and encourage candidates to reflect, e.g. by telling them to 'take your time'
- praise a good answer

  When candidates give a particularly incisive or interesting answer, it can be helpful to their morale to praise them
- give candidates a chance to recover from a poor answer

  When candidates give a poor answer, this may be through misunderstanding or nerves. Rephrasing a question and asking it again gives the able candidate the opportunity to recover the position or may confirm the inability to respond of a weaker one.

♦ **conclude the candidate's oral examination**

After you and your co-examiner are satisfied that you have gathered the relevant evidence, you should indicate this to the candidate, thank them for answering your questions, ask whether there are any concluding comments which they wish to make, explain again that the examiners will now consult about the outcome, and tell them how the recommendation will be communicated to them. While this may be done informally after the oral examination, candidates should be informed that formal notification of the result will be sent to them by the Graduate School Administrator.

♦ **reach a decision**

Following the conclusion of the oral examination, you should ask the candidate to leave the room while you and your co-examiner discuss and determine an agreed examination outcome in accordance with the recommendations permitted by the University regulations. The examiners discussions should be conducted in strictest confidence and out of range of the candidate or other students.

4.9 Poor practice in conducting the oral examination

According to Partington, Brown and Gordon (1993: p 78) poor practice when conducting an oral examination would be for an examiner to act throughout as:

♦ an inquisitor

This examiner behaves like a TV interviewer quizzing a politician during an election campaign, rapidly shooting out hostile questions, interrupting the answers, and generally trying to score points. Such an approach may intimidate the candidate so that he or she is unable to respond or anger them to the extent that the oral

examination becomes an adversarial confrontation.

- a proof reader

  This examiner takes candidates line by line through their theses asking questions about errors of spelling, punctuation and grammar. If these are exceptionally poor, instead of proof reading in the oral examination, examiners can make it a requirement that the thesis is re-typed or hand the candidate a list of corrections after the oral examination.

- a committee person

  The committee person takes the candidate through the thesis page by page questioning each matter as it arises rather than synthesising points into key issues relating to the trigger for the study, the methodology, the design.

- a hobby horse rider

  This examiner has strong feelings or prejudices about one area of the thesis and keeps returning to questions on this while neglecting other aspects of the research.

- a kite flyer

  The kite-flyer has identified a – usually fairly tenuous – link between the thesis and another subject and persists in exploring this to the detriment of the examination of the topic as defined by the candidate, i.e. effectively examines a thesis which the student did not write.

- a reminiscer

  This examiner continually regales the candidate with stories of their own research career to the detriment of the examination of the candidate's work.

5. Recommendations open to Examiners

5.1 Doctoral candidates

Following the first submission and examination of a candidate, the examiners may make the following recommendations for doctoral candidates:

-The Candidate be admitted to the degree

(a)(i) That the candidate be **admitted immediately** to the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

a)(ii) That the candidate be admitted to the degree of Doctor of Philosophy **subject to minor corrections** of the text made to the satisfaction of the internal examiner, normally within a period of one month of receiving formal notification of the corrections to be made.

(a)(iii) That the candidate be admitted to the degree of Doctor of Philosophy **subject to minor revisions** being made to the satisfaction of the internal examiner, normally within a period of up to six months of receiving formal notification of the revisions to be made.

-The Candidate be permitted to resubmit for the degree

(b)(i) That the candidate’s thesis be deemed to be of a satisfactory standard, but that the candidate be adjudged to have **failed to satisfy the examiners in the oral examination** and that the candidate therefore be required to attend within six months either for a second oral examination or for a written examination, as the examiners shall determine in their written report.

(b)(ii) That the candidate be adjudged to have **failed to satisfy the examiners in the thesis** and the candidate be permitted to **revise and re-submit the thesis** within twelve months for re-examination by both examiners, without a further oral examination.

(b)(iii) That the candidate be adjudged to have **failed to satisfy the examiners in the thesis** and the candidate be permitted to **revise and re-submit the thesis** within twelve months for re-examination by both examiners and be re-examined orally.

-The Candidate be recommended for a Master's degree

(c)(i) That the candidate has reached the **standard required for the appropriate Master's Degree** and should immediately be awarded that degree instead.

(c)(ii) That the candidate has reached the **standard required for the appropriate Master's Degree** and should be awarded that degree instead **subject to minor corrections** of the text made to the satisfaction of the internal examiner, normally within a period of one month of receiving formal notification of the corrections to be made.

(c)(iii) That the candidate has reached the **standard required for the appropriate Master's Degree** and should be awarded that degree instead **subject to minor revisions** being made to the satisfaction of the internal examiner, normally within a period of up to six months of receiving formal notification of the revisions to be made.

-The Candidate be permitted to resubmit for a Master's degree

(d) That the candidate be permitted to **revise and re-submit the thesis for the appropriate Master's Degree** within twelve months for re-examination by both examiners and be re-examined orally if the examiners so require by indication in their written report.

-The Candidate be adjudged to have failed to satisfy the examiners

(e) That no degree be awarded and that the candidate be **adjudged to have failed**.

Recommendations for doctoral award ((a) above)

In cases where examiners are satisfied that all of the criteria for the doctoral award are fully met, they should recommend the award of the degree immediately or subject to making minor textual corrections or minor revisions to the satisfaction of the internal examiner.

Where the examination has been conducted by two external examiners, they should agree between themselves who will receive the revisions before the award is finally recommended.

Other recommendations ((b) to (e) above))

In cases in which examiners are not satisfied that all of the criteria are fully met and are unable to recommend award, then there is a range of other recommendations which can be made. A recommendation to revise a thesis for resubmission and re-examination should only be made if, in the judgement of the examiners, it has the potential to meet the standards for the original award submitted for or for another award. If it does not, then it should be failed.

Recommendations Following a Further Oral or Written Examination

In the cases of candidates subject to recommendations c(i), c(ii), c(iii) and (d) above,

the only options open to the examiners when re-examining the thesis are:

-The Candidate be admitted to the degree

(a)(i) That the candidate be **admitted immediately** to the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

a)(ii) That the candidate be admitted to the degree of Doctor of Philosophy **subject to minor corrections** of the text made to the satisfaction of the internal examiner, normally within a period of one month of receiving formal notification of the corrections to be made.

(a)(iii) That the candidate be admitted to the degree of Doctor of Philosophy **subject to minor revisions** being made to the satisfaction of the internal examiner, normally within a period of up to six months of receiving formal notification of the revisions to be made.

-The Candidate be recommended for a Master's degree

(b)(i) That the candidate has reached the **standard required for the appropriate Master's Degree** and should immediately be awarded that degree instead.

(b)(ii) That the candidate has reached the **standard required for the appropriate Master's Degree** and should be awarded that degree instead **subject to minor corrections** of the text made to the satisfaction of the internal examiner, normally within a period of one month of receiving formal notification of the corrections to be made.

-The Candidate be adjudged to have failed to satisfy the examiners

(c) That no degree be awarded and that the candidate be **adjudged to have failed**.

5.2 Master of Philosophy candidates

Following the first submission and examination of a candidate, the examiners may make the following recommendations for Master of Philosophy candidates:

-The Candidate be admitted to the degree

(a)(i) That the candidate be **admitted immediately** to the degree of Master of Philosophy.

(a)(ii) That the candidate be admitted to the degree of Master of Philosophy **subject to minor corrections** of the text made to the satisfaction of the internal examiner, normally within a period of one month of receiving formal notification of the corrections to be made.

(a)(iii) That the candidate be admitted to the degree of Master of Philosophy **subject to minor revisions** being made to the satisfaction of the internal examiner, normally within a period of up to six months of receiving formal notification of the revisions to be made.

-The Candidate be permitted to resubmit for the degree

(b)(i) That the candidate's thesis be deemed to be of a satisfactory standard, but that the candidate be adjudged to have **failed to satisfy the examiners in the oral examination** and that the candidate therefore be required to attend within six months either for a second oral examination or for a written examination, as the examiners shall determine in their written report.

(b)(ii) That the candidate be adjudged to have **failed to satisfy the examiners** and the candidate be permitted to **revise and re-submit the thesis** within twelve months without a further oral examination.

(b)(iii) That the candidate be adjudged to have **failed to satisfy the examiners** and the candidate be permitted to **revise and re-submit the thesis** within twelve months and be re-examined orally.

-The Candidate be adjudged to have failed to satisfy the examiners

(c) That no degree be awarded and that the candidate be **adjudged to have failed**.

Recommendations for the Master of Philosophy award ((a) above)

In cases where examiners are satisfied that all of the criteria for the MPhil award are fully met, they should recommend the award of the degree immediately or subject to making minor textual corrections or minor revisions to the satisfaction of the internal examiner.

Where the examination has been conducted by two external examiners, they should agree between themselves who will receive the revisions before the award is finally recommended.

Other recommendations ((b) and (c) above))

In cases in which examiners are not satisfied that all of the criteria are fully met and are unable to recommend the MPhil award, then a recommendation to revise a thesis for resubmission and re-examination should only be made if, in the judgement of the examiners, it has the potential to meet the standards for the MPhil award. If it does not, then it should be failed.

Recommendations Following a Resubmission

In the cases of candidates subject to recommendations b(i), b(ii) and b(iii), the only options open to the examiners when re-examining the thesis are:

-The Candidate be admitted to the degree

(a)(i) That the candidate be **admitted immediately** to the degree of Master of Philosophy.

(a)(ii) That the candidate be admitted to the degree of Master of Philosophy **subject to minor corrections** of the text made to the satisfaction of the internal examiner, normally within a period of one month of receiving formal notification of the corrections to be made.

(a)(iii) That the candidate be admitted to the degree of Master of Philosophy **subject to minor revisions** being made to the satisfaction of the internal examiner, normally within a period of up to six months of receiving formal notification of the revisions to be made.

-The Candidate be adjudged to have failed to satisfy the examiners

(b) That no degree be awarded and that the candidate be **adjudged to have failed**.

In deciding which of these recommendations to make in a given case, examiners should also take into account of the factors in 5.3 below.

5.3 Other factors to be considered in determining the outcome

- **the amount of work entailed in revising the thesis**

  It is possible to recommend that the thesis should be revised and resubmitted within either six or twelve months, and examiners have to make a judgement about the amount of work entailed. If this is a re-writing of sections of the thesis, then normally up to six months is appropriate; if it is a complete re-write, then within twelve months

would be appropriate. If further research is required, this should normally be secondary, e.g. discriminating data or recalculating statistics, and not primary, e.g. gathering new data.

- **external factors relating to the research**

  While, of course, external factors relating to the research must not generally be regarded as extenuating in the context of recommending award, examiners may wish to take into account the availability of equipment or facilities when considering the time within which a candidate should have the opportunity to revise and re-submit their thesis, subject to the maximum of twelve months.

- **the personal circumstances of the candidate**

  - The University has established procedures for dealing with personal extenuating circumstances affecting research students throughout the duration of their studies. A research student can apply for an interruption of studies, a change of candidature or an extension to their submission deadline, if personal circumstances are impacting on their studies.

  - Following submission of a thesis, if a candidate is aware of any circumstances that may stop them from attending the oral examination, these should be brought to the attention of their Supervisor and the Graduate School Administrator, to determine if it is necessary to delay the oral examination.

  - A candidate should also contact their Supervisor and the Graduate School Administrator, if there are personal circumstances they believe could impact on their performance at the oral examination. This information will then be provided to the examiners, in advance of the oral examination, to determine if any reasonable adjustments are required.

  - Irrespective of personal circumstances, examiners will be expected to assess the candidate against the assessment criteria for the relevant research degree. Personal circumstances must not generally be regarded as extenuating in the context of recommending award. However, examiners might wish to take personal circumstances into account when considering the recommendations open to them and when specifying the time within which the candidate should have the opportunity to revise and re-submit, subject to the maximum of twelve months.

  - Such personal circumstances may include illness, pregnancy, personal stress, linguistic or cultural difficulties in undertaking and writing up the research.

  - By attending an oral examination, a candidate is declaring that they are fit to attend the examination, and as such, it is unlikely that a student would be able to submit a later claim that their performance was affected by personal circumstances.

  - Additionally, in the rare cases of candidates whose thesis is satisfactory but who fail the oral examination, personal circumstances may be taken into account in considering whether to hold a second oral examination or to hold a written examination. So if, for example, there are medical reasons why the candidate will perform poorly in an oral examination or in cases where candidates are returning overseas and will find it difficult to return for a second oral examination, examiners may consider substituting a written test.

6. Writing the Final Report

After reading the thesis and, if appropriate, conducting the oral examination, examiners have to decide upon a recommendation, write a report on the examination, and decide what information should be given to candidates required to amend or re-submit theses or dissertations. External examiners are also invited to make comments on any aspect of candidate's experiences which they have judged to be particularly good or which have raised problems.

Where an oral examination has been held, the final report should be written immediately following the oral examination or as soon as possible thereafter.

In the vast majority of cases, examiners independently arrive at the same verdict and concur in the recommendation. They should then jointly complete the supplied final report form. This involves completing a checklist of how far the criteria for the award have been met by the candidate and stating the recommendation to Senate. Final reports should be sent to the Graduate School Administrator who will, subject to approval by the relevant Dean of Postgraduate Studies, forward them to the candidate and the candidate's supervisor.

In a few cases, examiners may be unable to agree upon a recommendation. In this case, they should complete the form indicating their recommendations and the grounds for disagreement, and forward it to the Graduate School Administrator. (This report will not be made available to the candidate but will, if the candidate should subsequently appeal, form part of the formal record of appeal). The University will then appoint a new external examiner who will re-examine the thesis, if necessary conduct a further oral examination, and make a recommendation which is final. The additional examiner shall be told that the previous examiners had failed to reach agreement but will not have sight of the report. On the occasion of the second oral examination the candidate's supervisory team (and where appropriate the Internal Examiner) shall be available to be consulted by the additional external examiner. The relevant Dean of Postgraduate Studies shall appoint a member of University staff as an independent observer, who will report on the conduct of the oral examination. The main supervisor shall co-ordinate the arrangements for the oral examination. After the conclusion of the oral examination, the additional examiner shall make a recommendation which shall be final. He/she shall submit a final report to the relevant Graduate School Administrator who will, subject to the approval of the relevant Dean of Postgraduate Studies, forward it to the candidate and the candidate's supervisory team in the normal way.

6.1 Giving Information to Candidates Required to Revise or Resubmit Work

In cases where the recommendation is that changes need to be made to the thesis before resubmission, it is the responsibility of the examiners to provide a joint written statement providing full details of all changes and revisions required. This forms part of the Examiners' Joint Report which shall be formally forwarded to the candidate and the supervisory team by the relevant Graduate School Administrator with formal written confirmation of the examination outcome. It should be noted that the presumption is that if the candidate makes these changes and revisions to the satisfaction of the designated examiner this will lead to a recommendation for award. Normally it is the internal examiner who examines any minor corrections or minor revisions required to the thesis for students, but where there are two external examiners, it should be agreed who will undertake the role to examine the minor correction or minor revisions. Where a resubmission is required, both examiners will examine the resubmitted thesis.

It is therefore important that, before they part after the oral examination, the examiners agree exactly what the student is required to do before revision or resubmission. Where the recommendation is that the degree be awarded subject to minor textual changes, this will simply consist of a list of the corrections required, but where the thesis is referred for minor revisions (within a period of up to six months) or resubmission (within twelve months), a more substantial list of changes/work to be done must be provided. It is vital that this is comprehensive – a student who has made all of the changes required by the examiners but who is then denied the award because of further deficiencies would have good grounds for appeal.

6.2 Commenting upon the Candidate's Experience

External examiners are invited to make any relevant comments upon aspects of a candidate's experience or the examination process which they feel have been particularly good or which have raised problems. These comments will be sent to the relevant Dean of Postgraduate Studies for consideration.

References

R.Murray, The Viva (University of Strathclyde: Centre for Academic Practice, 1998)

J. Partington, G.Brown and G.Gordon, Handbook for External Examiners in Higher Education (Sheffield: CVCP, 1993)

Appendices

A) Additional Information for Examiners of Theses Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements of the Doctor of Philosophy (Integrated)

Integrated PhD programmes consist of two components:

1. Taught Component (120 - 200 credits):

This consists of taught modules including a choice of specialist modules and research methods modules. An individual programme of study is agreed between the student and the Degree Programme Director. All assignments are subject to moderation by an external examiner for the programme.

2. Research Component:

Every student submits a thesis of approximately 50,000 words (or as set out in Faculty guidance in the Rules for Form of Theses: http://www.ncl.ac.uk/regulations/docs/20RulesThesis.pdf. A formal written research proposal is approved by an independent school panel and supervisor/s are allocated. There is a formal progression meeting to approve progression from the taught to the research element. An independent school panel makes a recommendation on progress on the research element of the programme annually.

According to the University's regulations: "Candidates for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (Integrated) are required to demonstrate:

(a) a systematic acquisition and understanding of a substantial body of knowledge which is at the forefront of an academic discipline or area of professional practice;

(b) the creation and interpretation of new knowledge, through original research or other advanced scholarship, of a quality to satisfy peer review, extend the forefront of the discipline and merit publication;

(c) the general ability to conceptualize, design, implement and adjust a project for the generation of new knowledge, applications, or understanding at the forefront of the

discipline. Where appropriate, also to demonstrate the ability to formulate and test hypotheses and to generate alternative explanations for the data available;

(d) a detailed understanding of applicable techniques for research and advanced academic enquiry;

(e) a range of advanced professional and key skills related to their likely employment context including the ability to communicate their ideas and conclusions clearly and effectively to specialist and non-specialist audiences.

A doctoral thesis should exhibit substantial evidence of original scholarship and contain material worthy of publication."

An acceptable Integrated PhD thesis will therefore meet the same criteria as those laid down by the University for a traditional PhD thesis, namely original scholarship, methodological rigour and the inclusion of material of publishable quality. The length of the thesis will be around two-thirds of the length of a traditional PhD thesis, approximately 50,000 words. It is therefore likely that the Integrated PhD thesis will be more tightly focused, the literature review less broad in scope and the quantity but not the quality of data collected less than might normally be expected for a traditional PhD. Nevertheless, the rigour of the methodology, its validity and reliability, and the quality of analysis will match that of a traditional PhD thesis.

Students are encouraged to use their assignments from the taught element of the programme to help formulate their ideas, construct the methodology and explore the literature for their thesis. For many students, therefore, some of the work that might normally be found in a traditional PhD thesis will already have contributed to the assessed work for the taught component. These assignments are subject to external examination. They can however, be made available to both internal and external examiners of Integrated PhD theses prior to the oral examination should the examiners so require.

B) Additional Information for Examiners of Theses Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements of practice-based Doctoral degrees in Arts and Humanities

1. Fine Art and Digital Cultures practice-based PhD

In the field of Fine Art and Digital Cultures, candidates whose submission is not covered by the normal PhD regulations will undertake the following:

i) Research in creative Fine Art and Digital Cultures practice, leading to a final submission of a substantial body of creative art work which demonstrates coherence and originality and constitutes a recognisable contribution to the development of contemporary Fine Art and Digital Cultures practice.

and

ii) A critical commentary normally between 20,000 and 50,000 words. In this, the candidate will document and demonstrate in relation to the issues and questions identified and examined in the research project, a critical and reflective understanding of his/her creative processes, and demonstrate a critical and informed understanding of the contexts in which the artwork has been made. It will explain how this field has been expanded or developed through the candidate's research. This component of the submission will also include thorough visual documentation of the creative work.

2. Music practice-based PhD

In the field of music, candidates whose submission is not covered by the normal PhD regulations may undertake one of the following:

i) submit a portfolio of original compositions in an agreed format

or

ii) carry out substantial research in creative practice, leading to a final submission that includes documented performance as supplementary material

The expression "in an agreed format" is intended to accommodate a broad definition of composition where innovative modes of presentation are given equal consideration to submissions in conventional formats.

In both categories above, the final submission should constitute a substantial body of work demonstrating originality informed by contemporary practice, and demonstrating cohesion, command of existing technique and a recognisable contribution to the development of the discipline. A self-critical commentary normally between 20,000 and 40,000 words should be submitted demonstrating an ability to situate the candidate's creative practice within the broader context of the discipline. The submission should be supported by relevant audio and, if appropriate, audio-visual material.

3. Film Practice practice-based PhD

In the field of Film Practice, candidates whose area of research is not covered by the normal PhD regulations will undertake the following:

i. Research in creative Film practice leading to a final submission of substantial body of creative work which demonstrates coherence and originality and constitutes recognisable contribution to the development of contemporary Film practice. This research should be in an agreed format and may include a feature-length non-fiction/ documentary/ hybrid film, or a series of related short non-fiction/ documentary/ hybrid films. This information must be incorporated digitally in the hard copy of the thesis, but may also - by arrangement with the research supervisors – be presented in its original form in an exhibition or installation.

   and

ii. A critical commentary between 20,000 and 50,000 words. In this the candidate will document and demonstrate a critical and reflective understanding of his/her creative processes in relation to the issues and questions identified and examined in the research project. The commentary must frame the overall project, intellectually situating it in relation to relevant texts and practices within the broader disciplinary context. It will explain how the research field has been expanded or developed through the candidate'

4. Theatre/Performance practice-based PhD

In the field of theatre/performance, candidates whose submission is not covered by the normal PhD regulations will undertake the following:

i) Research in creative theatre/performance practice, leading to the delivery of a substantial piece of creative work which demonstrates coherence and constitutes a recognisable contribution to the development of contemporary performance practice, and

ii) A critical commentary normally between 20,000 and 50,000 words. In this the candidate will document and demonstrate a critical and reflective understanding of his/her creative processes in relation to the issues and questions identified and examined in the research project, and present a critical and informed understanding of the contexts in which the performance has been made. It will explain how this field has been expanded or developed through the candidate's research. This component of the submission will also include documentation of the creative work.

As with all research degrees, the University requires that work presented for examination in the field of theatre/performance should demonstrate the ability to create and interpret new knowledge through original research and advanced scholarship (for further details, see Section 3 'Examination Criteria' in the Handbook for Examiners of Doctoral and Masters of Philosophy Research Degree Examiners Handbook).

5. PhD in Creative Writing

A PhD in Creative Writing is weighted 70:30, with 70% of the submission being the creative project. The most significant part of the PhD and its main focus is therefore a substantial, original piece of creative work written specifically for the degree: a novel or collection of short stories; a collection of poetry; a play script or screenplay. As indicated, we would expect this part to be equivalent to two thirds of an academic PhD thesis of 100,000 words. We do not set more precise word limits on the individual components of the work because of the different requirements of different genres, but the exact word length will be agreed upon in consultation with the supervisory team and the Assistant PG Director for Creative Writing.

The second part of the thesis should be a critical section of around 30,000 words, which explores a topic, genre, theme, writer or group of writers. It is expected that the topic chosen for this part of the thesis should have some evident relationship to the creative element. This relationship may be direct or more oblique, but it must be articulated in the critical section, perhaps as an introduction or conclusion. It is necessary to pass both elements to be awarded the degree.

Different approaches to the critical part are acceptable and it can include an essay, interview material, or a creative journal, in which a student may use their own creative process as subject, and reflect upon their own work. Key to this part of the PhD is a serious body of reading, careful and correct referencing, and a bibliography. The style and structure of the resulting submission needs to be as carefully thought about as any other literary thesis, and must be germane to the research question as established at the point of application and recorded in the Project Approval Form.

For all research degrees, the University requires that work presented for examination should be: authentic in the sense that the submission should be the candidate's own work; scholarly, conforming to the normal canons of scholarship; professional, demonstrating that the author has acquired the skills of a professional researcher; and well-structured, well-written, and well-presented. (For further details, see Section 3 'Examination Criteria' in the Handbook for Examiners of Research Degrees by Theses.)

The critical section can also be thought of as requiring a third of the time spent on the thesis, i.e. a unit of twelve months, however this might be distributed across the period

of study as a whole. It would be unreasonable to expect Creative Writing students to develop within a twelve-month period the same theoretical and methodological background as students in Literature, or to have formed the same historical or contextual perspective. The critical component of the research will be likely to be more tightly focused, the review of literature less broad in scope and the quantity but not the quality of any information collected less than might be expected of a PhD in English Literature. The more focused nature of the critical component means that the criteria of originality and publishability laid down for the traditional PhD are more likely to apply to the creative project than the critical part. We interpret 'publishable' as referring to literary quality rather than to marketability. Nevertheless, the rigour of the work and the quality of the analysis will match that of the PhD in English Literature.

Therefore, the critical part of the thesis should be judged against the following criteria:

- How far is it a piece of work which demonstrates a doctoral level of attainment in terms of its intellectual engagement, scope, planning and argument which might be possible to achieve in twelve months?
- How far does it demonstrate a doctoral level of research and reading which it might be possible to achieve in twelve months?
- How far is it scholarly and accurate in its presentation?
- How far does it support and contextualise the originality of the creative project?

6. Practice-based Research Degrees in Architecture, Planning and Landscape

PhD

In the fields of Architecture, Planning and Landscape, candidates whose submission is not covered by the normal PhD regulations may undertake a PhD in Creative Practice.

This entails:

i) Carrying out substantial research in creative practice in Architecture, Planning or Landscape, leading to a final submission of a significant body of creative work, which demonstrates originality, coherence and understanding and makes a recognisable contribution to the development of the discipline. The research should develop through creative and sophisticated engagement with appropriate media and technologies (drawings, models, photography, installations, digital media, etc.). This material must be incorporated in the hard copy thesis document (see paragraph ii) below), but may also – by arrangement with the research supervisors – be presented in its original form (e.g. digitally, in a portfolio, in an exhibition, by installation, etc.).

and

ii) The submission of a hard copy thesis document that records, curates and presents the research carried out by creative practice and contains a critical commentary on it of between 20,000 and 50,000 words. This must frame the overall project, intellectually situating it in relation to relevant texts and practices and providing an extended critical and reflective analysis which situates the student's supporting research within the broader disciplinary context.

NB. As an alternative to the standard format, students undertaking research by creative practice may submit their hard copy thesis as a bound A3 document, with pages printed on both sides. The design of the thesis document is itself an important concern, which can work in concert with the research, and therefore theses do not have to observe the normal font and line-spacing requirements providing legibility is maintained.

MPhil

A thesis submitted for a practice-based MPhil in Creative Practice must incorporate an 8,000 - 20,000 word commentary together with full documentation of the practice-based research output. Formatting requirements correspond to those set out for the practice-based PhD in Architecture, Planning and Landscape.

7. Creative Practice PhD in Museum, Gallery and Heritage Studies

In the field of Museum, Gallery and Heritage Studies, candidates whose submission is not covered by the normal PhD regulations will undertake the following:

i) Research in creative Museum, Gallery and Heritage practice leading to a final submission of a substantial body of creative work which demonstrates coherence and originality and constitutes a recognisable contribution to the development of contemporary Museum, Gallery and Heritage practice. This research should be in an agreed format and may include a curated exhibition, interpretation product(s), digital media and educational activities related to a museum/gallery/heritage context. This information must be incorporated digitally or in a portfolio in the hard copy of the thesis, but may also – by arrangement with the research supervisors – be presented in its original form in an exhibition or installation.

and

ii) A critical commentary normally between 20,000 and 50,000 words. In this, the candidate will document and demonstrate a critical and reflective understanding of his/her creative processes in relation to the issues and questions identified and examined in the research project. The commentary must frame the overall project, intellectually situating it in relation to relevant texts and practices within the broader disciplinary context. It will explain how the research field has been expanded or developed through the candidate's research.

C). Additional Information for Examiners of Theses Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements of the joint Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) degree

The DBA awarded jointly by Grenoble Ecole de Management and Newcastle University is a professional practice doctorate, research-based and specifically designed to make a contribution to the enhancement of trans-disciplinary professional practice in management; as well as a contribution to novel knowledge production via the application and development of appropriate theoretical frameworks, methods, and techniques. This joint DBA is equal in quality and standing to the traditional PhD although it stems from the formulation of research questions informed by management practice and places emphasis on the novel application of theory, rather than the creation and testing of theory for its own sake. The programme is aimed at practicing managers who aspire to reach the highest academic qualification in Management and Business Studies. Its mode of delivery is through distance learning and a series of intensive residential workshops in the first two years of study.

An acceptable DBA thesis, based on original and individual research carried out throughout the DBA programme, should demonstrate a systematic acquisition and understanding of a body knowledge that is at the forefront of the academic disciplines that inform the candidate's area of professional practice. In addition, it should contribute to that practice by creating knowledge through original research and demonstrating how such knowledge helps improve current practice within an organization or a field. The examiners should therefore pay particular attention in the discussion of implications to not only theory, but also policy and practice, in one or more organizational settings.

The DBA thesis will meet the main criteria for a traditional PhD thesis, namely original scholarship, methodological rigour and the inclusion of material of publishable quality. It will differ only in its emphasis on implications for management policy and practice. The length of the thesis will be approximately 60,000 to 80,000 words. The DBA thesis will be more tightly focused on the candidate's work environment, the literature review as broad and deep in scope as in a traditional PhD; and the quantity and quality of data collected as well as the rigour of the methodology, its validity and reliability, and the quality of analysis will match that of a traditional PhD thesis.

The joint DBA oral examination will be an 'open door' event, with the stipulation that only the internal and external examiners are allowed to ask questions of the candidate. The preliminary reports by the examiners will be confidential and there will be no opportunity to revise the thesis prior to the oral examination. The possible outcomes of a DBA oral examination mirror the ones for the PhD oral examination.

D) Additional Information for Examiners of Theses Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements of the Doctorate of Clinical Psychology

Taught Component:

This consists of teaching and workshops to cover the curriculum stipulated by the HCPC standards and those of the British Psychological Society accreditation standards. Topics covered include; assessment, formulation, interventions, personal and professional development, as well as research methods. A number of assignments are used to assess skills, and knowledge in these areas including essays, critical review, portfolios, and a clinical viva/oral examination. All assignments are subject to moderation according to the University procedures and are reviewed by an external examiner for the programme.

Clinical Component:

In accordance with BPS and HCPC requirements, approximately 50% of the time on the course is spent working in a clinical setting. These placements cover the four mandatory experience areas (adult, child and family, learning disabilities, and older adults), and in the final year a 10 month elective placement is available. Clinical competence is assessed via observation of practice by supervisors, assessment on a trainee competence checklist and from assessment of case studies. Case studies are subject to moderation according to the University procedures and all clinical materials are available for review by an external examiner for the programme.

Research Component:

Every student submits a thesis consisting of a literature review and an empirical paper. Each is approximately 5,000 to 8,000 words (excluding references and appendices). A project compendium outlines potential project areas, and trainees work with supervisors to identify potential research questions. A formal written

research proposal is approved by an independent school panel (consisting of University representatives, NHS clinicians, and recent graduates) in the first year. Progress on all elements of the course, including the research element of the programme is undertaken annually. Successful completion of all elements of the course is necessary to proceed to the next stage of the programme.

An acceptable DClin Psy thesis will meet the same criteria as those laid down by the University for a traditional PhD thesis, namely original scholarship, methodological rigour and the inclusion of material of publishable quality. The literature review and empirical study will reflect an ability to review the empirical literature critically and to conduct original investigations, to test ideas and to understand the relationship of the chosen topic to wider fields of knowledge in psychology and its application.

The length of the thesis is substantially less than that of a traditional PhD thesis. It is therefore likely that the DClin Psy thesis will be more tightly focused, the literature review less broad in scope and the quantity but not the quality of data collected less than might normally be expected for a traditional PhD. Nevertheless, the rigour of the methodology, its validity and reliability, and the quality of analysis will match that of a traditional PhD thesis.

The overall Doctorate may be awarded with Distinction if the candidate's empirical paper received a distinction grade and all other elements have received at least a pass grade (Regulations 19). A candidate will be awarded a Pass with Distinction in Research if the empirical paper is of distinction standard and performance in the oral examination demonstrates to the examiners that the written work is commensurate with the candidate's performance.

If at the oral examination the dissertation has not met the required standard and is not capable of remediation, and if the candidate has reached the standard required in other areas of the course, it may be suitable for an appropriate Exit Award. Similarly, candidates who, following the requisite number of resit attempts, have failed to successfully complete all units of assessment in the final year of studies (maximum of one failed unit) may be awarded the ***MSc Clinical Applications of Psychology***. This will not entitle registration with the HCPC.

The criteria for the award of marks following oral examination can be found at http://www.ncl.ac.uk/psychology/assets/documents/VivaFeedbackGrid.docx

E) Additional Information for Examiners of Theses Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the Engineering Doctorate in the Schools of Chemical Engineering and Advanced Materials (CEAM) and Civil Engineering and Geosciences (CIVG)

Engineering Doctorate (EngD) programmes consist of two components:

1. Taught Component (120-200credits):

This consists of taught modules including a choice of specialist modules and research methods modules. An individual programme of study is agreed between the student and the Degree Programme Director. All assignments are subject to moderation by an external examiner for the programme.

2. Research Component:

Every student submits a thesis that takes the form of either a PhD thesis or a thesis by portfolio as appropriate to his or her research studies. According to the University's regulations: Candidates for the degree of Engineering Doctorate are required to demonstrate:

a) a systematic acquisition and understanding of a substantial body of knowledge which is at the forefront of an academic discipline or area of professional practice;
b) the creation and interpretation of new knowledge, through original research or other advanced scholarship, of a quality to satisfy peer review, extend the forefront of the discipline and merit publication;
c) the general ability to conceptualize, design, implement and adjust a project for the generation of new knowledge, applications, or understanding at the forefront of the discipline. Where appropriate, also to demonstrate the ability to formulate and test hypotheses and to generate alternative explanations for the data available;
d) a detailed understanding of applicable techniques for research and advanced academic enquiry;
e) a range of advanced professional and key skills related to their likely employment context including the ability to communicate their ideas and conclusions clearly and effectively to specialist and non- specialist audiences.

A doctoral thesis should exhibit substantial evidence of original scholarship and contain material worthy of publication.

For a thesis by portfolio, there is a requirement that a theme underpins the thesis and that each section is directly associated with said theme. The thesis must contain an Introduction that draws together the various sections and positions the research undertaken in the context of the overarching theme and places the work in the context of the current state-of-the-art in both academic and industrial research.

An acceptable Engineering Doctorate thesis will therefore meet the same criteria as those laid down by the University for a traditional PhD thesis, namely original scholarship, methodological rigour and the inclusion of material of publishable quality. The length of the thesis will be around two-thirds of the length of a traditional PhD thesis, approximately 50,000 words. It is therefore likely that the EngD thesis will be more tightly focused, the literature review less broad in scope and the quantity but not the quality of data collected less than might normally be expected for a traditional PhD. Nevertheless, the rigour of the methodology, its validity and reliability, and the quality of analysis will match that of a traditional PhD thesis.