



# PhD on the Basis of Prior Published Works

## Notes for Guidance

### This document

**The text below in bold and in boxes is regulatory.** *Italicized text represents guidance and explanations that are formally approved as part of the regulatory framework for PhDs on the Basis of Prior Published Works.*

*These regulations apply to those who wish to apply for, and candidates working towards, a PhD on the Basis of Prior Published Works at University of Plymouth sites of delivery, and in all UK and international partnerships unless a non-standard regulation has been formally approved.*

Non-italicized text below represent guidance notes and operational protocols that are current at the time of publication but are updated and revised on a regular basis by the Doctoral College.

### Introduction

The intention of this degree programme is to enable eligible candidates who have not previously been able to register for a higher degree but have been research active and publishing – or making research available – in the public domain, to submit a collection of works for consideration for the award of a PhD.

The submission must evidence that the candidate has personally made a systematic study; that they have shown independent, critical and original powers; and that they have made a distinct contribution to knowledge. The submission as a whole must be framed as a single coherent research project and meet the [QAA Framework for Higher Education Qualifications Descriptor for Doctoral level \(Level 8\)](#) work.

### Eligibility

There are no restrictions on who may apply for this degree programme, should they believe they are able to meet the requirements above.

*Students subject to immigration control should be aware that there may be additional restrictions on their progression. Information about current Tier 4 requirements is available from [International Student Advice \(ISA\)](#).*

### Works that may be submitted for the degree

- 1. With the approval of a relevant Faculty Doctoral Committee, a candidate can submit for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy on the basis of prior published works. All publications must be (at least) at the proofs stage (or equivalent for non-textual outputs) upon application, and in the public domain at the time of submission.**

*The work submitted for the degree should consist of a collection of published works, papers, chapters, books, and/or creative works in any media (including suitable documentation of performance, installation, and other temporary works) which together form a coherent programme of research and have been accepted for*

*dissemination by reputable journals, publishing houses, galleries, venues or similar publishing media in the field.*

Candidates should refer to Faculty guidance on what is considered an appropriate and coherent programme of research for their disciplines.

*Works should normally have been published in the English language. The candidate must obtain permission from the Doctoral College Quality Sub-Committee to submit works in languages other than English. This will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances.*

*A work will be regarded as published only if it is traceable through ordinary catalogues, abstracts or citation indices, and copies are available in the public domain. Manuscripts of proofs of works about to be published are not submittable unless they carry a DOI reference number. Reports to Government Departments, local or industrial organisations, and the like, are not normally submittable unless they have been published in the public domain and can be evidenced e.g. with an ISBN number.*

- 2. Works submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy on the basis of prior published works must together form a coherent body of work which responds to a research enquiry. At least one of the works must have been published within the last two years.**

*It is the responsibility of the candidate to identify and establish the research content of the submission.*

This is done at application stage, in order to establish a *prima facie* case, and then more thoroughly in the thesis itself via the integrative summary.

- 3. Works previously or simultaneously submitted for another degree, or emanating from research conducted for another degree, must not form a part of the candidate's submission for the award, and a declaration to this effect must be submitted by the candidate along with their application.**

### **Application**

- 4. The application process comprises two phases:**
- Phase 1: Expression of Interest (no fee)**  
**Phase 2: Full *prima facie* application (fee payable)**

#### **Phase 1: Expression of Interest**

Applicants must first submit an Expression of Interest to the University's Doctoral College ([doctoralcollege@plymouth.ac.uk](mailto:doctoralcollege@plymouth.ac.uk)), comprising:

- an abstract of their research (of no more than 300 words);
- a list of the works on which the submission is likely to be based (see above); and
- a curriculum vitae (no longer than 5 pages)

There is no fee attached to this phase of application.

The Doctoral College will, having consulted with relevant Faculties, send the application for consideration by the appropriate School within the University.

*The purpose of this stage is to enable the University to determine whether resources and expertise are available to support the applicant to completion of the degree within this area of study.*

The University will aim to respond to Expressions of Interest within 20 working days; those applicants who are not invited to progress to the next phase of application will be provided with brief feedback.

Applicants who wish to informally discuss their suitability to the programme are encouraged to contact the relevant [Postgraduate Research Coordinator](#). If they are unable to decide which area is most appropriate, they should contact the Doctoral College ([doctoralcollege@plymouth.ac.uk](mailto:doctoralcollege@plymouth.ac.uk)) for advice.

#### Phase 2: Full *prima facie* application

*If, under Phase 1 (above), a Faculty confirms that it has the resources and expertise to support the research content to completion, candidates must submit a full application within three months of the Phase 1 outcome.*

*The purpose of Phase 2 is to satisfy the University that a prima facie case can be made for candidature.*

*An application 'reading fee' is payable for this phase. Faculties may waive this fee for staff employed in their constituent Schools at their discretion. This 'reading fee' is in addition to the fee payable upon acceptance and enrolment.*

The full *prima facie* application is submitted to the Doctoral College and must comprise:

- a completed university postgraduate application form
- an abstract of the research (500 words max)
- the list of works on which the submission is likely to be based. This list must briefly explain where and when the research contributing to the published work was undertaken, and (if relevant) the nature of (and their role in) any collaborative or co-authored work.
- a curriculum vitae (no longer than 5 pages)
- a summary of not more than 6000 words, identifying the nature and significance of the works to be submitted for the degree. The summary should explicitly map and explain how the candidate believes that the submission meets the requirements of a PhD as set out in the [QAA Framework for Higher Education Qualifications](#).

The application will be considered by the Faculty identified by the Expression of Interest phase as most appropriate and able to supervise the proposed submission to completion. The process will be led by the Deputy Director of the Doctoral College (DDDC) for that Faculty.

The candidate may be required to attend an interview (in person or by videoconference), as part of this phase of the application process.

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| <p><b>5. The Faculty will allocate a potential Director of Studies, and an expert commentator (internal or external), to assess the applicant's <i>prima facie</i> application.</b></p> |
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Working with the relevant School, the DDDC will ensure that a potential Director of Studies and Expert Commentator are identified and that the Expert Commentator completes a report form within 20 working days. This form will be shared with the applicant when they receive the outcome of the application.

The applicant will be told of the date of the next Faculty Doctoral Committee at which their application and the Expert Commentator's report will be scrutinized.

*The proposed Director of Studies must write a statement that either supports the candidature or declines to do so, briefly explaining why in either case.*

It is the DDDC's responsibility to ensure that the application and all relevant documentation is presented and discussed at the next Faculty Doctoral Committee.

**6. The Faculty Doctoral Committee will determine whether a *prima facie* case exists, through consideration of the following documentation:**

- **An abstract of the research (of no more than 500 words);**
- **A list of the research outputs on which the submission is to be based, identifying where and when the research contributing to the published works was undertaken, as well as details of any collaborative or co-authored work;**
- **A curriculum vitae for the candidate;**
- **A statement that either supports or declines to support the candidature from the potential Director of Studies (of no more than 500 words);**
- **The Expert Commentator's report form**

**7. If the Faculty Doctoral Committee is satisfied that a *prima facie* case has been made for candidature, the applicant will be permitted to enrol for the degree and to prepare their submission for examination.**

*Where the Faculty Doctoral Committee does not find that a *prima facie* case has been made for candidature, the Faculty should provide feedback to the candidate (including a copy of the Expert Commentator's Report Form) and invite them to re-apply at a later date. The application reading fee will not be returned.*

The Doctoral College must be informed of this decision at the earliest opportunity in order to either send a formal acceptance or rejection to the applicant and, in the case of the former, to prepare an offer letter and enrolment.

*The acceptance of a *prima facie* case by the Faculty is not a guarantee that a PhD will be subsequently awarded to a candidate.*

## Preparation of submission for examination

- 8. The candidate will have a maximum of 12 months from the time of approval of the *prima facie* case to prepare their final submission for examination.**

*The final submission (henceforth referred to as the research portfolio) must display coherence and progression, and evidence that the candidate has:*

- *personally made a systematic study;*
- *shown independent, critical and original powers; and*
- *made a distinct contribution to knowledge.*

*In addition to the research outputs, the research portfolio must also include an integrative summary written by the candidate of between 7500-15000 words. The purpose of the integrative summary is to provide a critical overview and synthesis of the research outputs submitted and their contribution to the discipline.*

*In preparing the research portfolio, the candidate will be advised and assisted by a Director of Studies (DoS) who is experienced in the subject area, and who has successfully supervised at least two doctoral level degrees to completion. The DoS is likely to be the person who provided a supporting statement for the *prima facie* application but the Faculty may assign another relevant staff member if they are no longer available. The Faculty will also appoint a second supervisor.*

The supervisory team and candidate shall meet together (in person or by Skype) at least once every three months to discuss progress.

The role of the supervisory team is to:

- a) Guide the candidate in the final selection of research outputs to be included in the submission;
- b) Support and advise on the development and writing of the integrative summary;
- c) Advise the candidate on any necessary research training requirements;
- d) Advise and support the candidate on preparation for the viva and in undertaking any corrections to the work following the *viva voce* examination.

The research portfolio, excluding submitted books and documentation of exhibitions, artefacts and performances, must be presented in A4 format. Details of the presentation and contents of the research portfolio are included in Appendix A.

The Faculty Doctoral Committee may give permission for an alternative format to be used for the research portfolio where it is satisfied that this would be more appropriate.

*Candidates may apply for interruptions or extensions to their registration as per the Research Degrees Handbook. In the case of the latter, extension year fees will be payable (pro rata) according to the current fee levels (as per part time Band 1) on the University website.*

- 9. The Director of Studies will nominate the examining team approximately four months prior to final submission. Normal research degrees examination arrangements, as set out in regulation AST9.4 (items 2-5), will apply.**

*The criteria and process for the appointment of the examination team are set out in the Research Degrees Handbook. The two examiners will each assess the thesis independently, each attend the viva voce examination, and negotiate the examination outcome together. The examination team is formally approved by the Doctoral College Quality Sub-Committee.*

The candidate must submit to the Doctoral College a copy of their research portfolio for each of the examiners and the chair (if one has been appointed).

The Doctoral College will send out the submission to the examiners.

The Director of Studies will make the arrangements for the *viva voce* examination.

*Tuition fees (as indicated on the University website for this degree) must be paid for the entire year, even if the candidate submits the thesis for examination in less than twelve months.*

### **Examination and Outcome**

**10. The candidate is assessed by means of a research portfolio of published works, which must include a written element, and a *viva voce* examination attended by all the examiners. The language of the examination shall be English, unless otherwise approved by the Faculty Doctoral Committee.**

*Examiners should consult and follow the University's 'Notes of Guidance for Examiners of Research Degrees' and (if applicable) 'The Role & Responsibility of Independent Chairs at Viva Voce Examinations of Research Degrees', both available in the Research Degrees Handbook.*

**11. The examiners will determine whether the works submitted demonstrate that the candidate has undertaken study and research at least comparable with that required to prepare a PhD thesis in the same field.**

Examiners are therefore required to:

- evaluate the intellectual merit of the candidate's submitted published work;
- establish if a satisfactory case is made for coherence between the publications;
- assess the contribution to knowledge represented by the publications and made apparent in the integrative summary;
- evaluate the rigour with which the candidate has contextualised and analysed their publications in the integrative summary;
- evaluate the appropriateness of the methods employed in the research and their application;
- assess the candidate's contribution to the research in collaborative and/or multi-authored outputs, and establish the candidate's ownership of the published work;
- establish the candidate's appreciation of historical and current knowledge and discourse within the research area.

- 12. Following the examination, the examiners can make one of the following recommendations, based on the [QAA Framework for Higher Education Qualifications \(FHEQ\)](#) at the relevant level:**
- a. Pass: the degree be awarded. The examiners may provide advisory guidance on editorial corrections to the thesis, such as minor typographical or grammatical errors, or**
  - b. Corrections: the submission is satisfactory in substance, but the examiners have identified shortcomings in the shaping or articulation of the research. Corrections to be made to the satisfaction of one or all of the examiners by six months from the date of the formal notification of the outcome of the examination, or**
  - c. Compensatory award: the PhD is not to be awarded but an MPhil can be awarded subject to the presentation of the submission being amended to the satisfaction of the internal examiner (or Chair, where there is no internal examiner) by one month from the date of the formal notification of the outcome of the examination, or**
  - d. Fail: the degree not to be awarded.**

*Corrections and amendments can only be made to the integrative summary, abstract, front matter and bibliography. The published works are already in the public domain, and therefore cannot be revised following examination.*

*If the examiners recommend outcome (a) – Pass: the degree be awarded – the examining team may provide advisory guidance on editorial corrections such as typographical or grammatical errors. Where a student wishes to follow this guidance, all editorial corrections must be made to the integrative summary before submitting an electronic copy of the research portfolio to the University repository (see 16, below).*

The recommendation of the examiners will be confirmed to the candidate informally verbally after the viva voce examination by the examination team.

*In the case of disagreement amongst the examiners, the decision shall be deferred and the Doctoral College Quality Sub-Committee shall appoint an additional external examiner who will consider both the submission and the reports of all the original examiners, and come to a recommendation. After this evidence is compiled, an ad hoc meeting of the Sub-Committee will arbitrate and come to a decision on the outcome of the examination.*

- 13. Formal written confirmation of the outcome of the examination, including a list of corrections (if relevant) will be issued to the candidate by the Doctoral College on receipt of the examiners' report form(s).**

*If the examiners recommend Corrections (outcome b), or Compensatory award with amendments (outcome c), the corrections must be made and submitted to the Doctoral College by the relevant date, depending on the outcome. These will be distributed to the relevant examiners (or Chair, if relevant) for consideration.*

- 14. Possible outcomes after the submission of Corrections (outcome b) are:**
- a. Pass: the degree to be awarded,**
  - b. Corrections: the submission is satisfactory in substance, but the examiners have identified shortcomings in the shaping or articulation of the research. Corrections to be made to the satisfaction of one or all of the examiners by six months from the date of the formal notification of the outcome of the examination, or**
  - c. Compensatory award: the PhD is not to be awarded but an MPhil can be awarded subject to the presentation of the submission being amended to the satisfaction of the examiners by one month from the date of the formal notification of the outcome of the examination, or**
  - d. Fail: the degree not to be awarded and the candidate not be permitted to be re-examined.**

*Examiners must submit a completed Corrections Report Form to the Doctoral College with their recommended outcome. If the corrections are not completed to the satisfaction of the examiner(s) on the first attempt, outcome (b) should be recommended, with a list of remaining requirements. If the corrections are then submitted for a second time, and still not to the satisfaction of the examiners, outcome (c) or (d) should be recommended.*

Please see “Flowchart of PGR Examinations Outcomes” in the *Research Degrees Handbook*.

- 15. A candidate who fails to submit corrections by the date set by the examiners, without formal approval, shall be regarded as having failed the examination and the recommendations of the examiners shall lapse.**

Any request for an extension to the due date of the corrections must be made through the Extenuating Circumstances process.

*Extensions can only be granted with the agreement of the examiners, who will also be consulted on the period of extension if approved.*

- 16. An award will be made only when the electronic copy of the research portfolio has been submitted to the University repository, and the submission approved by the Doctoral College.**

*Candidates should submit the electronic copy of the research portfolio within 60 days of the official notice of the outcome. The published works will need to be included as either ‘green’/open access copies or as a list of DOIs, ISBNs, etc, if copyright restrictions apply. Otherwise, copyright permissions must be obtained and evidence of such presented in the submission.*



**17. A candidate to whom the degree is not awarded may submit a fresh application at any time, provided that such an application includes additional works based upon further study and research.**

*A new application will need to be made following Regulation 4 above ('Applications'), and all fees paid.*

**18. The academic appeals procedure, as set out in regulation AST11, shall apply.**

Doctoral College  
University of Plymouth  
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## Appendix A

### SUBMISSION FOR EXAMINATION

The research portfolio should be presented in A4 format and in a temporary binding in such a way that it can be opened fully, for ease of reading.

#### Recommended sequence

- **Title page:** Should include the following information: an appropriate title relating to the candidate's area of research, the full name of the candidate, the award for which the degree is being submitted in partial fulfilment of its requirements, that the degree is awarded by the University of Plymouth and the month and year of submission.
- **List of contents:** In sequence, with page numbers, including the list of the published works on which the submission is based with full bibliographic details.
- **Declaration:** Approximately 500 words, identifying where and when the study and research on which the works were based was undertaken, and declaring that no part of the submission has been considered for any other degree or award.
- **Abstract:** Normally not more than 500 words. Abstract to include full name of candidate (no abbreviations) and full title of the submission.
- **Integrative Summary:** Between 7500-15000 words, offering a critical, contextual and methodological overview, synthesis of the research outputs submitted, and a discussion of their contribution to the discipline(s) based on appropriate literature/scholarly review. Where any of the research outputs have been written or produced in co-operation with others, it is necessary to state the nature and proportion of the work that was carried out personally by the candidate.
- **Published works:** An offprint, scan or high quality copy of each research output submitted for examination. These works must be numbered and correspond exactly with the list of contents. No additional works should be included. Books, artefacts, monographs or other electronic formats (e.g. video documentation) may be submitted separately from the other published works and the integrative summary.
- **Evidence of Contribution** In the case of jointly authored or collaborative work, the candidate should provide proof of having made a substantive contribution to the output (e.g. letters from co-authors)
- **References:** A list of sources used in preparing the integrative summary but not cited in the published works.