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YORK
ST JOHN
UNIVERSITY

Guide to the examination process for research degrees

(including the requirements for the format and presentation
of theses for research degrees)

2026-27



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Section 1 Introduction

- 1.1.1 This document covers theses submitted for examination for the following research degrees under York St John University research degree regulations:
- PhD
 - Professional Doctorate/Doctor of Education
 - MA/MSc by Research
- 1.1.2 Candidates on the following routes MUST consult the individual requirements for those particular routes carefully and these are set out in the [Code of Practice for Research Degrees](#):
- Practice-led (CoP Section 15)
 - PhD by Published or Creative Work (CoP Section 18)
- 1.1.3 The PGR School will send emails to PGRs and supervisors at various stages during the examination process. These will normally be sent to University student email accounts so please ensure these are checked regularly for updates and information.
- 1.1.4 Further support and advice about the thesis examination process is also available on the [website](#). PGR School staff will be happy to help with any queries about the presentation of the thesis or with the examination process in general. Please contact pgr.school@yorks.ac.uk
- 1.1.5 MA/MSc by Research examinations will normally be carried out by an external examiner assessment of the thesis only. This will mean that the thesis is sent out to the external examiner and they will be asked to recommend the outcome of the exam and provide an examiner report. There will not normally be an oral examination but the external examiner may request that one be organised if it is considered necessary in order to confirm that the candidate meets the criteria for the award of the degree, and in this instance an independent chair will be appointed. No internal examiner will be appointed for these candidates. Section 5 contains details of the process.
- 1.1.6 Throughout this document the term **candidate** is used to indicate a **PGR** who is under consideration for achievement of an award.
- 1.1.7 V6 September 2026
- 1.1.8 A record of updates is stored in Section 14.

Section 2 Entering for examination (at least 3 months before submission)

2.1 Application for Assessment

- 2.1.1 The candidate must enter for examination by completing the online 'Application for Assessment' form via eVision. The form should be submitted at least 3 months before submission of the thesis. Candidates registered for a PhD by Published or Creative Work or a Practice-led research degree must also consult the relevant section in the ['Code of Practice for Research Degrees'](#).
- 2.1.2 In completing the form, the candidate will confirm the thesis title, whether they have been a member of University staff (as in some cases two external examiners might be required¹) and provide information on the ethical review status of the research. Candidates will also need to provide details of any solely or jointly authored publications which contain material incorporated into the thesis. Once a candidate has completed these details and submitted the form via eVision the supervisor will be advised that they may now access the supervisor section of the form.
- 2.1.3 The supervisor will need to add nominations for examiners, and confirmation of the thesis title, ethical review and publications information provided by the candidate. They will also confirm whether the thesis is, in their view, ready for examination after seeing a draft of the thesis.
- 2.1.4 The School Postgraduate Research Lead (SPGRL) will review the contents of the form and add a nomination for independent chair (where applicable).

2.2 Nomination process for examiner and independent chair roles

- 2.2.1 The 'Criteria for the appointment of examiners and independent chairs' should be referred to when seeking appropriate nominations for the roles of examiner and independent chair. Please see Section 2.3 for details of the number of examiners and requirement for an independent chair for particular research degrees.
- 2.2.2 The main supervisor should approach intended examiners and informally seek their agreement to act in their respective role. A consent form (available from the Postgraduate Research portal in eVision) will need to be completed by each examiner and submitted with the 'Application for Assessment' in eVision.
- 2.2.3 Where two external examiners are required (candidates who have been employed on a fixed term or permanent contract at grade 7 or above for a combined total of twelve months or more during the candidature) the nominated examiners should not be employed at the same institution.
- 2.2.4 Candidates may be asked by supervisors for their views on individuals who might act as examiners but the decision about the recommendations for appointment will be made following consultation between the supervisors and the SPGRL.
- 2.2.5 The SPGRL will need to seek the agreement of the nominee for independent chair and submit a completed consent form (available from the Postgraduate Research portal in eVision) with the 'Application for Assessment' in eVision.
- 2.2.6 The form will be checked by the PGR School and the names of the recommended examiners and independent chair will be considered by the Research Degrees Examination Panel (RDEP) for the final decision about the appointments to be made.

¹ Candidates employed on a fixed term or permanent contract at grade 7 or above for a combined total of twelve months or more during any point in the candidature will normally need two external examiners

2.3 Appointment of examiners and independent chair

PLEASE NOTE THE DIFFERING REQUIREMENTS ACCORDING TO PROGRAMME OF STUDY OUTLINED AS FOLLOWS:

Degree	Panel	Exam Format
Master of Arts by Research/ Master of Science by Research	External Examiner	Examiner assessment of thesis (see 2.3.1 below)
Master of Philosophy	Internal Examiner External Examiner(s) Independent Chair	Oral examination (see 2.3.2 below)
Doctor of Philosophy		
Professional Doctorate		
Doctor of Education		

- 2.3.1 The examiner assessment of the thesis (Master of Arts/Science by Research candidates) will be conducted by an external examiner only. There will normally be no requirement for an oral examination, however, the appointed external examiner may request that an oral examination is held if deemed necessary to ensure the criteria for award has been met.
- 2.3.2 An oral examination will be conducted by a minimum of two examiners, at least one of whom must be external to the University. An independent 'non-examining' chair will also be appointed to ensure that the examination is conducted fairly and in accordance with University requirements. Where the candidate being assessed is also employed as a member of University staff on a fixed term or permanent contract, at grade 7 or above for a combined total of twelve months during any point in the candidature, two external examiners will be required.

2.4 Timescales for the Application for Assessment

- 2.4.1 The thesis cannot be dispatched to the examiners until the 'Application for Assessment' form has been formally approved by the RDEP. In order for this process to take place, the form should be submitted at least 3 months before the intended thesis submission date. Forms which are received less than 3 months before thesis submission may delay the dispatch of the thesis to the examiners and, as a result, the examination process.
- 2.4.2 The candidate and supervisor should ensure sufficient time is allocated for completion of the form (see example timeline in Appendix 1). Discussions on the 'Application for Assessment' and examination arrangements should take place well in advance as it may take time to find suitable examiners who are available to examine the thesis. The examination arrangements will remain valid for 12 months from the date of approval.
- 2.4.3 Please refer to [Appendix 1 \(Typical timeline for the Application for Assessment\)](#) for further information on this part of the process.

2.5 'Exceptional circumstances' for research degree candidates

- 2.5.1 For research degree candidates, the University accommodates 'exceptional circumstances' by considering a period of suspension or extension of study which will lengthen the overall candidature and delay the deadline for submission of the thesis for examination. No 'exceptional circumstances' can apply to application of the criteria for award. To be eligible for the award of the degree, all candidates must submit a thesis and successfully complete an examination as prescribed in Section 5 or 6 below. The stated criteria for award of the degree and the specified learning outcomes must have been met.
- 2.5.2 Any circumstances which may have affected the candidate during their period of study should not be taken into account as part of the examination of the thesis and should not lead the examiners to award a research degree where the work is not felt to be of the appropriate standard. However, such factors might be taken into account when determining whether any reasonable adjustments to the examination process should be considered (for example in the case of a disability) or in terms of what support the candidate may need to complete any amendments to the thesis after the examination.

Section 3 Preparing the thesis for submission and examination

3.1 The advice of the supervisor(s)

- 3.1.1 Candidates are solely responsible for the decision to submit their work for examination, but advice should be sought from their supervisory team before submission. Candidates are strongly recommended not to submit against the advice of their supervisory team, although they reserve the right to do so, provided that the standard period of study for the degree has been reached and the maximum period of registration has not been exceeded. Candidates should make available to their supervisory team, within an agreed timescale, the whole of the draft thesis for comment prior to submission and the supervisor will need to confirm that the thesis is considered ready for examination. However, a candidate should not think that the award of a degree is guaranteed on the basis that a supervisor has indicated general approval for the thesis to be submitted.

3.2 Content and style of thesis

- 3.2.1 A supervisor will read and comment on the whole of the draft thesis prior to submission, provided that it is submitted within a reasonable time. Candidates will receive advice from a member of the supervisory team on matters such as clarity and style, as well as academic content. At this stage, the relationship between supervisor and candidate is essentially one of academic equals in the particular research area concerned and the advice of the supervisor(s) is advisory only.

3.3 Thesis title

- 3.3.1 The thesis title must be clearly defined, focussed and an appropriate description of the work carried out.
- 3.3.2 Once the title presented on the 'Application for Assessment' form has been approved any subsequent change will need to be approved by RDEP.

3.4 Format of the thesis

- 3.4.1 The thesis should be submitted to the Research Degree Submission Moodle site (see section 4.1) in electronic format as a PDF document, in accordance with the following requirements. Examiners will also be given the option of receiving a softbound copy in addition to the electronic version. Once the examiners have been appointed, candidates will be notified as to whether any softbound copies of the thesis will be required².

3.5 Page size

- 3.5.1 A4 page size must be used.

3.6 Text

- 3.6.1 The thesis must be written in English³. Theses must be presented in a standard font which is clear and easily readable both in print form and when converted to PDF. The main body of text should be 11pt to 12pt in size, whilst headings may be shown in a larger font size. Candidates should consult with their supervisor regarding any text or font conventions normally used in a particular discipline. Fonts that are in upper case only or in which some letters are non-standard are not acceptable for use in a thesis text.

3.7 Layout

- 3.7.1 All margins (left, right, top and bottom) must be not less than 20mm. Text must be in double spacing or one and a half line spacing. Single spacing may only be used for indented quotations and footnotes.

3.8 Pagination

- 3.8.1 Pages of text and appendices must be numbered consecutively throughout the thesis, including photographs and/or diagrams where possible. Page numbers must appear on each page in a consistent style throughout the thesis.

3.9 Presentation of the thesis title page

- 3.9.1 The title page must give the following information (an example is available here: <https://www.yorks.ac.uk/policies-and-documents/research/research-degrees/#thesis-submission-and-examination>):
- (a) The full title of the thesis (and sub-title if any), as submitted on the 'Application for Assessment'.
 - (b) The candidate's full name, as held in the University's student records system, including any and all middle names⁴.
 - (c) 'Submitted in accordance with the requirements for the degree of' with the name of the relevant degree added in full afterwards.

(d) 'York St John University' followed by either:

- (i) The name of the School in which the candidate is supervised; or
- (ii) If the candidate received formal supervision in two Schools (one of which was the parent School) the names of both Schools may be included.

(e) The month and year of submission **for examination**⁵.

3.9.2 The title page should not contain any images, diagrams or photographs.

3.10 Intellectual property and publication statements (second page)

3.10.1 The second page of the thesis should give the following information (an example is available here: <https://www.yorks.ac.uk/policies-and-documents/research/research-degrees/#thesis-submission-and-examination>):

(a) One of the following statements: either

- (i) If there are no jointly authored publications from the thesis: 'The candidate confirms that the work submitted is their own and that appropriate credit has been given where reference has been made to the work of others.' Or
- (ii) If there are **jointly** authored publications which have been used in the thesis: 'The candidate confirms that the work submitted is their own, except where work which has formed part of jointly authored publications has been included. The contribution of the candidate and the other authors to this work has been explicitly indicated below. The candidate confirms that appropriate credit has been given within the thesis where reference has been made to the work of others.'

The candidate must then also include on this page of the thesis: (a) details of which chapters are based on work from jointly authored publications; (b) details of the publications which have been used (e.g. title, names of authors, dates, journals etc.); (c) details of the work contained within these publications which is directly attributable to the candidate; and (d) details of the contributions of the other authors to the work.

- (b) A statement as follows: 'This copy has been supplied on the understanding that it is copyright material. Any reuse must comply with the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 and any licence under which this copy is released'⁶.
- (c) © <Year of Submission for examination> 'York St John University and' <the candidate's full name>.
- (d) Optional – Assertion of moral rights. If a candidate wishes to assert their moral right to be identified as the author of the work the following should also be inserted:

'The right of <candidate's full name> to be identified as Author of this work has been asserted by them in accordance with the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.'

² See section 3.26 for the binding requirements of a softbound thesis.

³ With the exception of research degrees in the modern languages where, in certain circumstances approved by the RDEP, a thesis may be submitted in a language other than English.

⁴ The presentation of the candidate's name in the University records is normally expected to correspond with that shown in their passport or other legal documentation.

⁵ Both the thesis submitted for examination and the final thesis must show the month and year that the work was originally submitted for examination (and not the date the final, amended copies are submitted).

⁶ For further information see the [IPR Policy](#).

3.11 Declaration on the use of Generative AI (third page)

- 3.11.1 The standard YSJ statement on the use of Generative AI, as set out below (and in the [Sample Title Pages](#)), should be included on the third page:

Declaration on the Use of Generative AI

In accordance with York St John University's policy on generative artificial intelligence, I hereby declare that:

1. I have used generative AI tools only as a supportive resource—for example, to improve readability or assist with basic grammar and style—recognising that these tools serve to support, and not replace, my own original thinking and critical analysis.
2. Any information, text fragments, or ideas generated by AI have been critically evaluated, edited, and integrated by me. No AI-produced content has been used verbatim in the final thesis, and no substantial sections were generated by AI and submitted as original work.
3. Any uses of AI are explicitly acknowledged in relevant sections throughout the thesis.
4. I have documented any use of AI and retained relevant records (e.g., text-based transcripts) to ensure transparency in alignment with the university's standards on academic integrity.
5. I have not entered any confidential, personally identifiable, proprietary, or copyrighted content into any AI service, consistent with data-protection and copyright requirements.
6. I recognise my responsibility to evaluate AI outputs for accuracy, bias, and relevance, and to ensure that final content of my research reflects my own scholarly judgment.
7. My submission adheres fully to York St John University's Research Misconduct Policy and the Code of Practice for Research Degrees, and I confirm that no use of generative AI could reasonably be considered to constitute plagiarism, false authorship, or misrepresentation as outlined in university guidance.

3.12 Acknowledgements page

- 3.12.1 This page should contain any acknowledgements to those who have assisted with the candidate's work. Where the candidate has worked as part of a team a specific statement should be included as follows: 'This research has been carried out by a team which has included (name the individuals). My own contributions, fully and explicitly indicated in the thesis, have been.....(please specify). The other members of the group and their contributions have been as follows: (please specify).'

3.13 Abstract

- 3.13.1 An abstract of the thesis of **no more than 300 words** should be included immediately after the 'Acknowledgements page'.

3.14 Table of contents, lists of tables and illustrative material

- 3.14.1 The table of contents should immediately follow the abstract. It should list in sequence, with page numbers, all relevant subdivisions of the thesis, including the titles of chapters, sections and subsections, as appropriate; the list of references, the bibliography; the list of abbreviations and other functional parts of the thesis; any appendices; the index (if provided).

3.15 Abbreviations

- 3.15.1 Where abbreviations are used, a key must be provided.

3.16 Referencing styles

- 3.16.1 An established referencing standard must be used in the thesis (examples include Harvard or APA or other recognised referencing style used within a discipline). It is important that the candidate is familiar with the referencing conventions used in the subject area and that they seek further advice from the supervisor or SPGRL on employing the correct academic conventions for referencing and citing work within the discipline. Further information on referencing is available from <https://www.yorks.ac.uk/students/referencing/> or the Academic Liaison Librarians: <https://www.yorks.ac.uk/students/library/academic-liaison-librarians/>.

3.17 Illustrative material, drawings, maps, photographs etc.

- 3.17.1 Illustrative matter should have margins of at least 20mm and, wherever practicable, appear in the thesis near the appropriate text. Photo-reduced tables and charts may be included in the thesis provided that the photo-reduced copies are of good quality and in a form consistent with the need for clarity and legibility.

3.18 Presentation of candidate's name on the thesis

- 3.18.1 The candidate must register with the University using their legal name (i.e. the name shown in their passport or other legal documentation) and this registered name must be used in the thesis. The candidate's name must be presented in full on the title page, including any and all middle names which are held in the University's student records system.
- 3.18.2 If the candidate wishes to change their legal name from that used when they first registered with the University they must submit a case through the [Student Hub](#) and include legal evidence of the change. Such evidence includes a birth, marriage or civil partnership certificate, deed poll, gender recognition certificate, etc. International students must provide their passport to verify a change of name.
- 3.18.3 Candidates can amend their 'known as' name on their student record by submitting a case through the [Student Hub](#), however, their legal name must be used on their thesis.

3.19 Inclusion of supplementary material with the thesis

- 3.19.1 Supporting supplementary material may be included along with the thesis submission for examination. This should be used in exceptional circumstances only, where it is considered that it may be important for examiners to have access to supporting material. **Material should not be provided as supplementary data or information if it is essential reading for the examiner in order for them to reach a considered evaluation of the work.**
- 3.19.2 Where it is necessary to include supplementary data or information alongside the thesis, the relevant section of the 'Application for Assessment' form will need to be completed at the time of entry for examination. In such cases, the candidate will be required to confirm that there is no requirement for the examiners to refer to the supplementary material, and the thesis will stand alone and be intelligible and examinable without that material. The supplementary material should be submitted electronically to the PGR School alongside the eThesis.

3.20 Practice-led research degree submissions

- 3.20.1 Candidates registered for a practice-led research degree must also consult the University's practice-led section of the '[Code of Practice for Research Degrees](#)'. Section 15 of that 'Code of Practice' sets out specific information relating to the submission and assessment of practice-led research degrees and includes details on the assessment of any live practice and the recording and format of that practice.

3.21 PhD by Published or Creative Work submissions

- 3.21.1 Candidates registered for a PhD by Published or Creative Work degree must also consult Section 18 of the University's '[Code of Practice for Research Degrees](#)' which provides further information on the submission and assessment of the PhD by Published or Creative Work. The standard formatting conventions outlined above should be used in the format of the Critical Review.

3.22 Use of solely or jointly-authored publications within a thesis submission

- 3.22.1 The University encourages all candidates to publish their work and disseminate their results, either before or after submission of a thesis. The University has issued '[Guidance on the use of solely or jointly-authored publications within a thesis](#)' (which have been carried out during the candidature). This is intended to provide candidates with further information on identifying the contribution of others to the work contained within the thesis. This is especially important when chapters might have been based on jointly authored publications as the examiners will need to be able to clearly identify the work directly attributable to the candidate. This will allow examiners to determine whether there is an original contribution by the candidate and whether this contribution is at the appropriate level to merit the award of the degree.
- 3.22.2 Where work which has formed part of a solely or jointly authored publication is to be included within a thesis, candidates must declare their intention to use this work in the appropriate section of the 'Application for Assessment' form.
- 3.22.3 For work which has been solely authored candidates will need to confirm which chapters of the thesis include the work that has been published in the appropriate section of the AFA.
- 3.22.4 Where the work has been jointly authored candidates should complete the AFA Jointly authored publications consent form and upload it to e:Vision with the AFA. This form will need to include the endorsement of co-authors to the information provided as to individual contributions to the publication(s).
- 3.22.5 If work has been used in the thesis which has been published in a solely or jointly authored publication, then the candidate must also provide an electronic copy of the publications with the thesis submitted for examination⁷.

3.23 Thesis word limit

- 3.23.1 During the examination of the thesis the examiners will be considering both the quality and value of the work and the way in which the candidate has chosen to present their review, results, arguments and conclusions. The candidate's ability to express their findings in a clear and concise manner will be under examination and excessive length or too discursive a style will be judged a weakness. The supervisor is best placed to advise on the desirable length and form of the submission within the University's limits.
- 3.23.2 The University expects that theses will normally not exceed the following maximum lengths⁸:

Degree	Minimum length	Maximum length
MA and MSc	N/A	30,000 words (100 pages)
MA Practice-led	5,000 words (15 pages)	10,000 words (30 pages)
MPhil	N/A	60,000 words (200 pages)
MPhil Practice-led	20,000 (60 pages)	30,000 words (100 pages)
PhD	N/A	100,000 words (300 pages)
PhD Practice-led	25,000 (75 pages)	50,000 words (150 pages)
Professional Doctorate / EdD	N/A	50,000 words (150 pages)
DBA	N/A	60,000 words (200 pages)
PhD by Published Work	Please see specific requirements in Section 18 of the ' Code of Practice for Research Degrees '	

Please note that the above limits include all appendices and footnotes but not bibliographies/reference lists.

⁷ If the appointed examiners have requested a softbound copy of the thesis for examination purposes a hard copy of the publications will be required with each softbound copy.

⁸ The page limits given here are an approximation based on the candidate having presented the thesis (text size, spacing) in accordance with these regulations. Candidates will need to provide the thesis word count on the Research Degrees Submission Form.

3.24 Extensions to the maximum length of theses

- 3.24.1 It is accepted that in some disciplines it may be necessary to exceed the stipulated limit in individual cases. If it is the candidate's belief that they cannot avoid exceeding the above maximum length, they should talk to the supervisor and then, if necessary, the SPGRL will seek approval from the RDEP. It is therefore in the interests of the candidate to consider the question of overall length during the initial stages of thesis preparation.

3.25 Accessibility of theses

- 3.25.1 In September 2018 new digital accessibility regulations, [the Public Sector Bodies \(Websites and Mobile Applications\) \(No. 2\) Accessibility Regulations 2018](#), came into effect. The accessibility regulations are about ensuring public sector bodies, including the University, make websites and mobile apps accessible and ensuring that they can be used by as many people as possible. Accessibility means more than putting things online. It means making content and design clear and simple enough so that most people can use it without needing to adapt it, while supporting those who do need to adapt things. Following the award of a research degree the thesis will be made available online via the University's repository and candidates are asked to ensure that their thesis has been checked for accessibility.
- 3.25.2 Candidates can find out how to make their content accessible through the online [Digital Accessibility Training](#) course.

3.26 Softbound thesis (if required by examiner)

- 3.26.1 Examiners are given the option of receiving a softbound thesis for examination purposes, in addition to the electronic PDF version. Candidates will be advised by the PGR School if they are required to provide one or more softbound copies. The softbound copy should be an exact print copy of the PDF file and can be done either single or double-sided. Mixtures of single and double-sided text are not acceptable (excluding the title pages).
- 3.26.2 A softbound thesis should be submitted in accordance with the following requirements:
- (a) Heat bound (or other similar binding method) with a black fabric strip.
 - (b) A4 size paper (of good quality and of sufficient opacity for normal reading) should be used and all text presentation, lay out, title pages, pagination, table of contents, tables, etc., should meet the regulations set out above.
 - (c) The front and back covers should be royal blue card.
 - (d) The outside of the cover should show the candidate's initials and surname, School, degree and year of submission. This information can be printed onto a sticker/label and applied to the front cover of the thesis. No information is required on the spine of a softbound thesis.
 - (e) Supplementary material that cannot be bound into a softbound thesis should be included in a pocket inside the back cover.
- 3.26.3 Please note that a ring, spiral-bound or loose-leaf binder is not an acceptable form of submission.
- 3.26.4 Softbound theses can be produced using the University's in-house Print Services function. Requests, orders and enquiries can be submitted using the [Print Order Form](#). Queries can be emailed to printservices@yorksj.ac.uk. Candidates may choose to use an alternative binding service as long as the above requirements are met.
- 3.26.5 Candidates should provide softbound copies within five working days of being advised by the PGR School that one or more examiners have requested a softbound copy. Orders may be placed with Print Services by email and candidates can ask for PGR School staff to collect the copies on their behalf when ready.

Section 4 Submitting the thesis for examination

4.1 Process for submission

- 4.1.1 Submission of the eThesis for examination must be made via the Research Degree Submission Moodle site. **Theses must not be sent directly to the examiners.** Candidates will have access to the submission portal once their 'Application for Assessment' form has been approved by RDEP. If a candidate is ready to submit their thesis and the 'Application for Assessment' has not yet been approved, or for any other problems with submission, please contact pgr.school@yorks.ac.uk.
- 4.1.2 [Appendix 2 \(Typical timeline for the thesis submission\)](#) outlines the process of submission up to the point of examination.
- 4.1.3 Candidates are solely responsible for the decision to submit their work for examination and for the thesis which is submitted. **Candidates must check the eThesis (and any softbound copies) thoroughly before submitting for examination.** Once the thesis has been submitted it cannot then be subsequently changed or amended. Substitute versions of theses, additional pages or supplementary material cannot be accepted after submission of the thesis and these must not be sent directly to the examiners. This applies in all cases, irrespective of whether the thesis was submitted for examination on or before the maximum time limit for submission.

4.2 Submitting the thesis

- 4.2.1 The thesis should be submitted electronically through the Research Degree Submission site on Moodle. The PGR School will give candidates access to the submission site and will provide the link to be used for submission. The electronic submission should consist of the following:
 - (a) A PDF eThesis (or critical review, abstract and list of publications in the case of PhD by Published or Creative Work).
 - (b) A completed Research Degree Submission Form.
 - (c) Electronic copies of any solely or jointly-authored publications where the content has been used in the thesis (see section 3.22).
 - (d) Supplementary Data/Information to be included with the thesis (see section 3.19).
- 4.2.2 Additional softbound copies of the thesis may be required, depending on the examiners' preferences and candidates will be informed if they need to provide any softbound copies.

4.3 Deadline for submission

- 4.3.1 All candidates must submit their thesis for examination by the end of the maximum period of registration for the research degree programme upon which they are registered. It is recommended, however, that candidates should aim to submit their thesis within the standard period of study prescribed for the programme.
- 4.3.2 Where the maximum time limit for submission falls on a day when the University is closed as a consequence of a holiday period (for instance a Bank Holiday), the deadline for submission of the thesis to Moodle will be 23:59 on the next working day.
- 4.3.3 This does not apply where the maximum time limit falls on a Saturday or Sunday. If the maximum time limit for submission falls on a Saturday or Sunday, the thesis will need to be submitted on or before the last available working day of the week.
- 4.3.4 Candidates may find it useful to consider dates of religious observance in planning for their thesis submission. The Open University has a calendar of religious festivals which is available from the [OU website](#).

4.4 Dispatch of the thesis to examiners

- 4.4.1 The thesis will be sent out to examiners normally within 2 working days of submission providing that the thesis meets the University's requirements and the 'Application for Assessment' has been approved by the RDEP. The PGR School will send an email to the candidate's University account to confirm that the thesis has been sent out to the examiners and will include advice about the next stages in the process.
- 4.4.2 If the PGR School has only recently received the 'Application for Assessment' (or the form has not yet been submitted), if there are any issues with the length or formatting of the thesis, or if the thesis has been submitted after the maximum time limit there will be a delay in sending the thesis out for examination.

4.5 Use of University facilities whilst awaiting examination

- 4.5.1 All candidates awaiting examination may continue to use the University facilities for a period of up to 6 months from the date of submission of the thesis. There is no charge for this and it will ensure that candidates are able to make use of University facilities whilst preparing for examination and also for a short period after examination when amendments may be required to the thesis. It may also assist with preparation of papers for publication.
- 4.5.2 The arrangements for this are made at the time of thesis submission. **Once a candidate's award has been confirmed by the Research Degrees Examination Panel the student ID card will no longer be valid for use.** If there is a delay in the examination which means a candidate needs access for longer than 6 months they should contact the PGR School (pgr.school@yorks.ac.uk).

Section 5 External Examiner Assessment of Thesis (MA/MSc by Research candidates)

- 5.1.1 The arrangements set out in this section only apply to candidates on a Master of Arts/Science by Research programme and are submitting a thesis for examination. Variations to the following prescribed arrangements for the examination may only be made by a decision of the RDEP.

5.2 Examination format

- 5.2.1 Master's by Research theses will be examined by an external examiner appointed by RDEP. The thesis will be despatched to the external examiner, and they will be asked to return the external examiner's report and recommendation to the PGR School within six weeks of receiving the thesis if possible, but by a maximum of three months.
- 5.2.2 An oral examination will not normally be held but the external examiner may request that one takes place if deemed necessary to ensure that the criteria for the award of the degree have been met. If an oral examination is required the process set out in Section 6 will be followed.

5.3 External Examiner's Report and Recommendation

- 5.3.1 Once the external examiner has assessed the thesis they will complete the 'External Examiner's Report and Recommendation' and return the report to the PGR School. If the recommendation is that the degree is not awarded but the candidate is permitted to resubmit for re-examination, the external examiner must also provide 'Recommendations for Resubmission' and return these with the report.
- 5.3.2 Candidates will be informed of the examiner's recommendation once the 'External Examiner's Report and Recommendation' has been approved by RDEP. The PGR School will send the report to the candidate once it has been approved.

Section 6 Oral examination

- 6.1.1 The arrangements set out in this section apply to candidates submitting a thesis for Doctoral or MPhil examination. Variations to the following prescribed arrangements for the oral examination may only be made by a decision of the RDEP.

6.2 Preparing for the oral examination

- 6.2.1 A range of training courses and other support is available for those nearing the completion of their research degree to help prepare for the oral examination.
- 6.2.2 Some candidates may find it helpful to have a 'mock viva', and if so, should consult their supervisors to have one arranged. Please also ensure familiarity with the [requirements and learning outcomes for research degrees](#).
- 6.2.3 Candidates may also find it helpful to look at the template joint examiners' report form which describes the criteria against which the examiners will be assessing work.

6.3 Arrangements for the oral examination

- 6.3.1 It is intended that the oral examination will be held within three months of the dispatch of the thesis to examiners. However, delays in this timescale can sometimes happen due to examiner availability or late submission of the 'Application for Assessment'.
- 6.3.2 All communication with the examiners and independent chair should be through the PGR School, who will liaise with the examination panel to set up detailed arrangements for the oral examination. Provisional arrangements will be checked with the candidate prior to them being confirmed. The examiners are expected to take account of known religious observances when establishing a date for the oral examination and candidates should advise the PGR School if there are any particular dates which would be impacted in this instance.
- 6.3.3 Occasionally delays may occur due to unforeseen circumstances being encountered by those involved in the examination, e.g. sickness absence. If this happens the PGR School will contact all those involved as soon as possible and advise what the next steps will be in relation to the situation that has occurred.
- 6.3.4 Where these unforeseen circumstances lead to a date for the oral examination needing to be re-scheduled the PGR School will liaise with those involved to identify the best course of action with regard to re-scheduling either with the original examination team or an alternative nomination for examiner or independent chair.
- 6.3.5 Please see [Appendix 3 \(Typical schedule for an oral examination\)](#) for more information.

6.4 Difficulties in attending the oral examination

- 6.4.1 The oral examination will normally be scheduled within 3 months of dispatch of the thesis to the examiners and the candidate is expected to make all reasonable efforts to be available for the oral examination in this period. Should exceptional circumstances arise which might prevent a candidate from being available for the oral examination in this period the PGR School should be informed at the earliest opportunity.
- 6.4.2 The award of a research degree cannot be considered unless the oral examination is completed. If circumstances arise which prevent a candidate from attending the oral examination, a valid reason, supported by documentary evidence (for example a medical note in the case of illness), must be provided. If a substantiated valid reason is provided for unavailability/absence of the candidate, permission may be given to delay, postpone or reschedule an oral examination. Individual cases will be considered by the RDEP. However, if a substantiated valid reason cannot be provided, this may result in the candidate being withdrawn from the University with no further opportunity to complete the oral examination.
- 6.4.3 No candidate will normally be granted a period of postponement to the oral examination of more than 12 months from the date the thesis is sent out to the examiners. As examiners may become unavailable for various reasons, and a topic, once original may not remain so indefinitely, it is extremely unlikely that a request for a postponement to the oral examination exceeding these periods will be granted.
- 6.4.4 If a candidate is studying on a Student visa, and the oral examination is scheduled outside of 3 months from submission of the thesis, the University may not be able to continue to sponsor the candidate to remain in the UK whilst awaiting examination. In this instance the candidate should contact the Visa & Compliance Office (visa@yorks.ac.uk) for advice. Those candidates who have submitted their thesis and are preparing for their oral examination must continue to attend to the satisfaction of the University.

6.5 The oral examination

- 6.5.1 Candidates will undergo an oral examination also known as a *viva voce*. The examination must be conducted in English⁹. The purpose of the oral examination is to ensure that the work submitted for examination reaches the University standards for the degree and that the candidate has written and understands the work submitted. The University does not have specific regulations regarding the length of the oral examination or what should be discussed except that the thesis should be discussed with the candidate. Some examiners will also wish to satisfy themselves of the candidate's general level of understanding of the subject area. The oral examination also gives the candidate an opportunity to answer questions in areas where the examiners are not satisfied; e.g. for a doctoral degree evidence of originality and independent critical ability is required and, where the evidence in the thesis is not compelling, the examiners may use the oral examination to encourage the candidate to provide convincing evidence that the stated criteria can be met.
- 6.5.2 The structure of the examination itself may vary depending on circumstances. The examiners may request that the candidate give a short presentation (of no more than 10 minutes) at the start of the examination. If this is required candidates should be given at least two weeks' notice and the arrangements must be made through the PGR School.
- 6.5.3 The oral examination will normally be conducted as an online examination meeting using Microsoft Teams, unless it is agreed that an on-campus examination should be held. A candidate can put forward a request for an on-campus examination to the PGR School (pgr.school@yorksj.ac.uk) outlining the reasons why this would be their preferred option. The examination will not be held online in any case where the supervisor or SPGRL feels that a candidate may be placed at a disadvantage. A hybrid arrangement split between participants being on campus and joining the examination remotely may be more appropriate in some instances. Arrangements will be made by the PGR School and any concerns about the arrangements should be directed to the PGR School.
- 6.5.4 All parties involved in an online examination will need to have access to the appropriate technology (software and hardware) and be comfortable with its use. Participants may request that the PGR School schedule a test call with them before the examination if desired. If there are any doubts about the connection and whether it will last the duration of the examination, it should not go ahead online and a face-to-face examination will be scheduled. All parties must understand that in the event of any failure with the technology before or during the examination it may not be possible for the examination to continue and it will be necessary for it to be rescheduled.
- 6.5.5 An online examination will be comparable to those used for a face-to-face examination. The PGR School will ensure that the examiners and independent chair can speak privately with one another before and after the examination, whether held online or on campus.
- 6.5.6 The candidate should have a copy of the thesis (either hard copy or digitised version) available during the oral examination for their own use.
- 6.5.7 Once the oral examination has finished, and the candidate (and supervisor if present) have left the examination, the examiners will consider their recommendation. The recommendation will be given informally to the candidate, normally after the oral examination, but within one full working day of completion of the oral examination.

6.6 Recording of the oral examination

- 6.6.1 All oral examinations will be subject to audio (or video, if more appropriate) recording. The recording will cover the duration that the candidate is being examined and will not cover the discussions between examiners before or after that time. The PGR School will be responsible for the arranging the recording equipment and for secure storage of the recording after the examination. The independent chair will be responsible for the recording during the examination and its subsequent transfer to the PGR School for storage.
- 6.6.2 The recordings will be kept in accordance with the '[Policy and Guidance on the Recording of Oral Examinations](#)'.
- 6.6.3 Individual participants must not make separate audio or video recordings of the examination. AI notetaking software must not be used during the meeting.

⁹In certain circumstances approved by the RDEP, the oral examination might, with the agreement of the examiners, be conducted in a language other than English, eg research degrees in the modern languages or British Sign Language.

6.7 Attendance of a member of the supervisory team at the oral examination

- 6.7.1 A candidate may invite a member of their supervisory team to attend the oral examination as an observer. A supervisor may only attend with the candidate's prior permission and must respect their wishes on this matter. If attending as an observer, a supervisor may not participate in the oral examination and takes no part in the academic judgement and the decision-making process. They must leave the examination (along with the candidate) prior to the examiners' discussion on their recommendation. The examiners have the right to ask a supervisor to leave the examination if they believe their presence may jeopardise the smooth running or integrity of the oral examination.
- 6.7.2 Those present at the oral examination will be the candidate, the external examiner(s), the internal examiner, the independent chair and a member of the supervisory team (as an observer, if it is decided that they should be present). Only one member of the supervisory team is permitted to attend the oral examination. If there is not to be a member of the supervisory team present as an observer, at least one member of the supervisory team is required to be available for consultation by the examiners if necessary.

6.8 Support for disabled candidates

- 6.8.1 Disabled PGRs are protected by law from discrimination arising out of their disability. The University, and those acting on its behalf, have a legal obligation to ensure that no disabled PGR is treated less favourably than a non-disabled PGR, and that reasonable adjustments are made so that they are not placed at a substantial disadvantage compared to other PGRs for a reason relating to their disability.
- 6.8.2 Oral examinations may place some disabled PGRs at a substantial disadvantage, for example PGRs who work with a sign-language interpreter, PGRs who have short term memory difficulties, PGRs who are blind and use assistive software, PGRs who have Asperger Syndrome or other social communication differences. In such cases reasonable adjustments to the oral examination process will be considered.
- 6.8.3 The range for adjustments that could be made to the examination is as diverse as the range of disabilities that could be experienced. Every disabled PGR will experience their disability differently, and for this reason it is impossible to provide blanket guidance for the types of reasonable adjustment that can be made to the examination.
- 6.8.4 Candidates are able to access Disability and Inclusion support through the University's [Student Hub](#) and this may lead to recommendations for reasonable adjustments to the examination being identified through a Learner Adjustment Plan (LAP).
- 6.8.5 Requests for reasonable adjustments for the oral examination which have been identified in a LAP should be made through the 'Application for Assessment' form.
- 6.8.6 On the day of the examination the PGR School is responsible for facilitating any agreed reasonable adjustments to the oral examination. This will ensure that reasonable adjustments to the oral examination are put in place so that disabled candidates are not disadvantaged by the examination process. However, the same academic standards for the award of the particular research degree must be upheld and the thesis must meet the criteria and standard expected for the qualification concerned.

6.9 Joint Examiners' Report

- 6.9.1 The Joint Examiners' Report should be fully completed within **one full working day** of the end of the oral examination. The report must be typed using the template provided and returned to the PGR School as soon as possible.
- 6.9.2 If the recommendation is that the degree is not awarded but the candidate is permitted to resubmit for re-examination, the examiners must also prepare 'Recommendations for Resubmission' and submit these with the final report. The Recommendations for Resubmission must be typed, headed 'Recommendations for Resubmission' and attached to the joint examiners' report form.

Section 7 Recommendation of the examiners

7.1.1 One of the following recommendations may be made:

- a) Award of the degree (without amendment).
- b) Award of the degree subject to amendments.
- c) Lower degree awarded (with or without further amendment to the thesis).
- d) Degree not awarded but resubmission permitted for the original or lower award (following further work and on one occasion only).
- e) No research degree awarded (only possible on resubmission other than where specified under the 'Research Misconduct Policy').

7.2 Award of the degree (without amendment)

- 7.2.1 If the candidate has met the learning outcomes for research degrees, and the thesis satisfies the requirements for award and does not require any alterations to be made, an award of the degree without amendments may be recommended. Where this outcome is given the candidate may correct typographical errors in the thesis prior to submission of the final version in Moodle.
- 7.2.2 The candidate must submit the final eThesis to Moodle within **1 month** of the examination.

7.3 Award of the degree subject to amendments

- 7.3.1 If the candidate has met the learning outcomes for the programme, and the thesis satisfies the requirements for the award of the degree but is found to contain errors, an award of the degree subject amendments being made may be recommended.
- 7.3.2 The examiners are asked to provide the details of the amendments directly to the candidate in writing within **one full working day** of the examination and the candidate should then begin work on these immediately.
- 7.3.3 The amendments must be completed and returned to the examiner within **6 months** of the oral examination. There is no requirement for a further examination.

7.4 Lower degree to be awarded (with or without further amendment to the thesis)

- 7.4.1 If it is considered that the thesis does not have the potential to reach the standard to merit the award of PhD a recommendation for award of the degree of MPhil, with or without further amendment to the thesis, may be made. The thesis should be amended in accordance with section 7.2 above. In the case of a first submission the examiners should recommend that the degree is not awarded but that resubmission is permitted if they believe that the candidate and the submission are potentially of PhD standard (see section 7.5 below).
- 7.4.2 If no amendments are required to the thesis before recommendation that the lower degree can be made, the candidate must submit the eThesis to Moodle within one month of the oral examination.

7.5 Degree not awarded but resubmission permitted for the original or lower award

- 7.5.1 If it is considered that the thesis has not reached the standard to merit the intended award examiners may recommend that the degree is not awarded. The candidate may make a second attempt to satisfy the requirements of the award of the degree through a re-examination, following further work on the thesis. This recommendation can be made on one occasion only and may be for the original or a lower award.
- 7.5.2 A second oral examination will usually be conducted, however, at the point of resubmission the examiners may recommend an exemption from a further oral examination. In the case of Masters by Research candidates an examiner assessment of the re-submitted thesis (as defined in Section 5) will be undertaken.
- 7.5.3 Examiners are required to prepare 'Recommendations for Resubmission' to outline the changes required and these will require approval by RDEP before being issued to the candidate. The candidate will receive official notification of the maximum deadline for resubmission from the PGR School along with the 'Recommendations for Resubmission' and a copy of the examiners' report, once approved by RDEP. The preliminary reports are also available on request from the PGR School.

- 7.5.4 The period for resubmission begins from the date the 'Recommendations for Resubmission' are issued to the candidate. Resubmission must take place within the following time limits:

Degree	Resubmission period
PhD resubmission	within 18 months
MPhil resubmission	within 15 months
PhD original submission being resubmitted for MPhil	within 12 months
Master's by Research resubmission	within 9 months

- 7.5.5 Candidates should bear in mind that these are the maximum time limits for resubmission and that they may resubmit at any point during this period, once the revisions have been made and the thesis is ready for resubmission.
- 7.5.6 During the resubmission period candidates will be able to have up to six supervision meetings per year and these should be initiated by the PGR.
- 7.5.7 Candidates are also required to supply a summary of how the revised thesis has responded to changes detailed by the examiners in the 'Recommendations for Resubmission'. This will also assist the examiners when considering the resubmitted thesis. There is no set format for this and the candidate is asked to present this in a format which best reflects the changes they have made.

7.6 No research degree awarded

- 7.6.1 Examiners may not recommend that the thesis be failed on a first examination, other than where specified under the 'Research Misconduct Policy'. Otherwise, this recommendation is only possible on resubmission and there is no further opportunity to revise and submit the work. The examiners' report must clearly explain the reasons for not recommending the award of a degree and this will be sent to the candidate after approval by RDEP.

7.7 Research excellence recognition (doctoral submission only)

- 7.7.1 Where examiners identify doctoral candidates who have submitted an excellent thesis a recommendation can be made by the examiners for this outstanding achievement to be recognised by the University.
- 7.7.2 Research excellence would be expected to principally reflect outstanding achievement in the thesis and oral examination at a level significantly above what would be expected for the award of a doctoral degree (highly original, high level of critical thought, outstanding presentation of the work), where the candidate has fulfilled all requirements for the degree, either with or without amendments being made to the thesis. Evidence might also be identified from associated research outputs which might include: major theoretical contribution; acceptance for publication of sections in major journals; patents; prizes for completed work; marketable software; original equipment; new therapies; major exhibitions or performances arising from the practical part of a practice-based degree.
- 7.7.3 Examiners are invited to comment on any research excellence which is identified in the submission in the Joint Examiners' Report Form and provide further information in support of this recommendation. If the recommendation is approved by the Research Degrees Examination Panel the candidate will receive a prize voucher and a letter of congratulations from the Pro Vice Chancellor (Research and International).

7.8 Approval of the Joint Examiners' Report

- 7.8.1 After the examination the examiners must produce a joint examiners' report which includes their recommendation and this report will be considered by RDEP. In some cases RDEP may request further information from the examiners before giving final approval to the report. A copy of the approved joint examiners' report will be emailed to the candidate's University email account (and the supervisory team) after it has been approved by RDEP.

7.9 Process in the event of a disagreement between the examiners

- 7.9.1 In the exceptional circumstances where the examiners fail to reach agreement on the recommendation the independent chair is asked to contact the PGR School immediately¹⁰. RDEP will consider arrangements on a case by case basis in line with the following process.
- 7.9.2 In the event that agreement cannot be reached, the independent chair must advise the candidate in writing (copied to the PGR School), within one working day of the examination, that the examiners are unable to reach an agreement on the recommendation and that they will be submitting separate final report forms to the University. The examiners must submit separate, independent final reports to the PGR School within 5 working days of the examination.
- 7.9.3 On receipt of the reports, the PGR School will write to the candidate, supervisor(s), SPGRL and the original team of examiners to outline the next steps in the process (as defined below). The PGR School will also send copies of the preliminary and independent final reports to the SPGRL for information.
- 7.9.4 The examiners' final reports, along with the preliminary reports, will be considered by RDEP. After RDEP has considered the reports the SPGRL will be asked to recommend, within a period of 1 month, the appointment of an adjudicator. The SPGRL may consult with the supervisors as appropriate.
- 7.9.5 It is expected that the individual nominated as the adjudicator will be a senior member of staff of another UK University and a very experienced examiner of UK based research degrees. The other eligibility criteria for the appointment of external examiners will apply. A CV must be provided.
- 7.9.6 Once the nomination is approved by the RDEP, the PGR School shall send the adjudicator:
- A copy of the eThesis as submitted for examination.
 - The separate preliminary and final reports of the original examiners.
 - A copy of the Instructions to Examiners.
 - A blank report form template for the degree concerned.
- 7.9.7 The adjudicator will be asked to submit a final report and recommendation to the RDEP within a period of 2 months. This will include the usual report form for award for the degree concerned and a covering letter outlining the reasons for the recommendation reached.
- 7.9.8 The adjudicator may interview the candidate if they deem it necessary. In such cases the independent chair who was appointed for the original examination will attend the meeting and advise on procedures. The interview will be recorded (normally audio, but video if necessary). These arrangements will be considered by the RDEP on a case by case basis.
- 7.9.9 RDEP will consider the report from the adjudicator, alongside the separate reports of the original examiners. The recommendation of the adjudicator will normally be approved by RDEP (subject to any minor points of clarification under its normal procedures).
- 7.9.10 The PGR School will inform the candidate, supervisor and SPGRL of the outcome. A copy of the adjudicator's final report will be provided, along with copies of the original team of examiners' reports. If a recommendation for award of the degree is made the candidate will be advised of the next steps to be taken. If an adverse academic decision is reached, the candidate will have the right to appeal under the University's appeals procedure.
- 7.9.11 The PGR School will write to the original team of examiners to inform them of the recommendation made by the adjudicator and the decision approved by RDEP.

¹⁰ Examiners are reminded that although the process of notifying the candidate and supervisor of the outcome of the examination will normally take place after the oral examination it must take place within one working day of the oral examination. This period can be used by the examiners to discuss the recommendation and to endeavour to reach an agreement.

Section 8 Completion of amendments to the thesis

8.1 Completing amendments to the thesis (after examination)

- 8.1.1 After successful examination the candidate should begin to prepare the final version of their thesis by undertaking any amendments and returning these to the internal/external examiner within six months of the date of the oral examination. Individual pages of the thesis must be fully corrected and it is not possible to simply provide an errata page.
- 8.1.2 The candidate should ensure that the amendments are clearly identifiable within the thesis, preferably by tracking changes, or alternatively by providing a separate list of amendments made. The candidate must also ensure that the thesis abstract remains appropriate. Candidates are advised to consult with their supervisory team throughout this process.
- 8.1.3 The examiner **does not take a supervisory role during this period but may, however, provide clarification of the amendments required.** The candidate should consult with their supervisory team in the first instance and, if appropriate, a supervisor may contact the examiner for further clarification.

8.2 Approval of amendments

- 8.2.1 Once the amendments have been completed they must be submitted to the internal/external examiner (as appropriate) for checking. An internal examiner will consult with the external examiner(s) on the amendments as they wish. To assist in the process of checking and approving the amendments it is strongly recommended that the candidate provides information outlining what amendments have been made, along with the corrected thesis. This could be in the form of tracked changes or supplied as a separate list and candidates should check with the examiner as to what format they would prefer. Once the examiner has approved the amendments they should notify the PGR School.
- 8.2.2 At this point the PGR School will advise the candidate to prepare their final eThesis in accordance with section 9 below.

8.3 Extensions to the amendment periods

- 8.3.1 If a candidate experiences any problems completing and returning the amendments by the deadline they must draw this promptly to the attention of their supervisory team or SPGRL. In exceptional circumstances a candidate may request a short extension to an amendment deadline. The request should be submitted to the PGR School for consideration by RDEP.

Section 9 Preparing and submitting the final eThesis

9.1 Preparing the final eThesis for submission

- 9.1.1 All candidates must submit their successful thesis as an eThesis (and redacted eThesis if required, see Section 9.3) in PDF format for retention in the University's Digital Repository (RaY).
- 9.1.2 Candidates who were recommended for the award of the degree without amendment must submit the eThesis (and redacted eThesis if required) to Moodle by no later than one month after the date of examination. If the examiners' recommendation was that amendments were required before final submission, the deadline is by no later than **one month** after the examiner has given approval to the amendments made to the thesis.

9.2 Format and presentation of the eThesis

- 9.2.1 The final version of the eThesis must be produced in accordance with the regulations set out in section 3 above (candidates registered for a practice-led research degree must also consult the practice-led section of the 'Code of Practice for Research Degrees').
- 9.2.2 One single PDF file should be supplied which contains the complete eThesis and all appendices. On opening the PDF file the first page accessed by the user should be the title page of the thesis.

9.3 Preparing a redacted eThesis (if required)

- 9.3.1 Candidates are expected to make all reasonable efforts to seek permission to include third party copyright material in their thesis. However, it is recognised that in some cases it may not be possible to gain permission, either because permission is declined, no response is received or because it would be too expensive. This means that the full text of the eThesis cannot be made available online.
- 9.3.2 If a candidate has not been able to obtain the permission of the copyright holder, two versions of the eThesis will need to be prepared, as follows:
 - a) eThesis 1: A 'complete eThesis' consisting of a single file containing the full content of the thesis.
 - b) eThesis 2: A 'redacted eThesis' with any third party copyright material redacted if permission has not been obtained. To redact images or large sections delete and replace with a statement such as 'This image has been removed by the author of this thesis for copyright reasons'. If possible, when removing material, a placeholder should be included to retain the pagination of the original document. Small sections can be redacted by using the redaction tool in the Adobe Acrobat software to replace text with a solid black block. A complete eThesis MUST still be supplied but will not be made available online. After the end of any embargo period placed on the thesis only the redacted eThesis will be made available for access.

9.4 Submitting the eThesis

- 9.4.1 The final eThesis (and redacted eThesis if required) should be submitted to the Research Degree Submission site on Moodle. Candidates must complete a 'Research Degree Deposit Form' and submit this to Moodle along with the eThesis. The PGR School will deposit the thesis into [RaY](#) after approval of the award.
- 9.4.2 The eThesis will not go live in the repository until after the degree has been confirmed. Candidates who are in negotiation with a publisher about alternative publication arrangements are advised to contact their supervisor or the University Copyright, Licensing and Research Librarian (m.kilvington@yorks.ac.uk) for further guidance.

9.5 Thesis embargo arrangements

- 9.5.1 The Thesis Deposit Form specifies whether the thesis can be made immediately available or whether a restriction on access might be required. In exceptional circumstances it may be necessary for the candidate to embargo the thesis from publication if it contains commercially or otherwise sensitive material, or patentable subject matter. If an embargo has been placed on access to the thesis then the file will not go live until after the embargo has expired.

9.6 Creative Commons Licences

- 9.6.1 There are six types of Creative Commons licence. It is important to understand the differences as they affect the ways in which others can share and reuse an author's work. The University has a Copyright, Licensing and Research Librarian (m.kilvington@yorksj.ac.uk) who can offer guidance on how a researcher can use Creative Commons licences with their work.
- CC BY: attribution only.** This is the most permissive of all the licences. It allows anybody to share, remix and build upon an author's work, including for commercial purposes. They must always credit the author for the original creation.
- CC BY-ND: attribution, no derivative works.** This licence allows others to share the author's work, including for commercial purposes, so long as they do not change it in any way. They must always credit the author for the original creation.
- CC BY-SA: attribution, share alike.** This licence allows others to share, remix, and build upon the author's work, including for commercial purposes. They must licence their new creation under identical licence terms. They must always credit the author for the original creation.
- CC BY-NC: attribution, non-commercial use.** This allows others to share, remix and build upon the author's work, but they cannot use it for commercial purposes. They must always credit the author for the original creation.
- CC BY-NC-SA: attribution, non-commercial use, share alike.** This licence allows others to share, remix and build upon the author's work, but they cannot use it for commercial purposes. They must licence their new creation under identical licence terms. They must always credit the author for the original creation.
- CC BY-NC-ND: attribution, non-commercial use, no derivatives.** This is the most restrictive of all the licences. It only allows others to download and share the author's work with others, but they cannot change them in any way, or use them for a commercial purpose. They must always credit the author for the original creation.

9.7 Intellectual Property Rights

- 9.7.1 Intellectual property attracts legal protection depending on what it is and when it was created. There are four main classes of intellectual property: copyright, patents, designs, and trademarks. For further details please refer to the University's Policy on Intellectual Property Rights.

9.8 Copyright

- 9.8.1 It is the responsibility of the candidate to ensure that any content included in the thesis does not contravene copyright law. Copyright protection applies to works under the following categories: Literary (includes computer programs), Dramatic, Musical, Artistic, Films, Sound Recordings and Broadcasts. The standard period of copyright protection in the UK is 70 years from the death of the author or creator.
- 9.8.2 Further information on copyright is available as follows:
- [University Copyright Essentials](#) webpage
 - [Intellectual Property Office Copyright](#) website:
 - IPO PDF guides to exceptions to copyright law: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/changes-to-copyright-law>
 - Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1988/48/contents>
 - Copyright User: <http://copyrightuser.org/>

Section 10 Appeals

10.1 Appeals procedure

- 10.1.1 Candidates wishing to appeal against an academic decision should refer to the University's [Appeals Procedure](#).

Section 11 Research Misconduct

11.1 Research Misconduct Policy (Research Students)

- 11.1.1 YSJU is committed to maintaining the highest ethical standards in research carried out by candidates during the course of their research degree. Research misconduct includes, but is not limited to: fabrication; falsification; plagiarism; failure to meet ethical; legal and professional obligations; and improper dealing with allegations of misconduct. The University's Research Misconduct Policy (Research Students) will be followed in cases of alleged misconduct.

Section 12 Award of the degree and graduation

12.1 Award of a research degree

- 12.1.1 Once the award has been approved by the Research Degrees Examination Panel, Registry will issue an award letter.
- 12.1.2 The degree can only be awarded once **all** the following conditions have been met:
- a) The joint examiners' report has been approved by the RDEP.
 - b) The PGR School has received confirmation that the internal examiner is satisfied that any amendments have been completed.
 - c) The final eThesis in has been submitted to Moodle in PDF format, along with the Research Degree Deposit Form.
 - d) The recommended award has been approved by the Research Degrees Examination Panel.
 - e) All tuition fees to the University have been paid.
 - f) If applicable, all assessed or taught modules have been completed successfully.
- 12.1.3 Candidates must remember to return any borrowed equipment and Library books and check with the School about any leavers' protocol which may need to be followed.

12.2 Posthumous Award

- 12.2.1 A posthumous award may be made by the Research Degrees Examination Panel. Each case is considered on its merits and a request may be made by the School on the recommendation of the main supervisor and with the support of the School Postgraduate Research Lead, and upon such evidence as required by RDEP. A request may be made by completing the Posthumous Award Recommendation form and submitting to the PGR School.

12.3 Graduation

- 12.3.1 The examination of theses can take time and the University cannot guarantee that a thesis will always be examined in time for the next graduation ceremony. Degree ceremonies are normally held in November (York campus PGRs) and March (London campus PGRs) of each year. Further information is published on the University's [Graduation webpages](#). Attendance at a degree ceremony is subject to approval of the award in good time to permit participation in the ceremonies. If a candidate has had their award approved but does not wish to attend a ceremony, they can choose to have the degree conferred *in absentia* and the certificate will be posted. A degree can only be conferred on one occasion, *either* at a degree ceremony **or** *in absentia*.
- 12.3.2 Successful candidates will be required to register their graduation choice (either a ceremony or *in absentia*). Candidates may register their intention to attend graduation prior to their degree being awarded, but will not be eligible to graduate if they have not had their degree awarded by the date of their ceremony.

12.4 Degree certificate

- 12.4.1 The University provides each successful candidate with one original copy only of the certificate bearing their full name according to University records on the date on which their degree was awarded. A candidate cannot change their name registered in the University's records after that date. If a replacement certificate is required in the future (e.g. if the original copy is lost or destroyed), this will normally bear the name under which the candidate graduated.
- 12.4.2 A hard copy certificate will be available on graduation day. Any PGR that graduates *in absentia* will have their certificate posted out to their confirmed home address, after the graduation ceremonies have taken place.

12.5 Gradintelligence

- 12.5.1 Official digital certification of the award will also be made available through Gradintelligence (also known as Gradintel). This document will bear the signature of the University's Academic Registrar and the Vice Chancellor, is tamper proof and can be shared with others as verification of the award.
- 12.5.2 Documents will only become available following approval of the award by the Research Degrees Examination panel.
- 12.5.3 Candidates will receive an activation email from Gradintel once their award is confirmed asking them to register with Gradintelligence. Once the activation process has been completed access will be available to the digital certificate. Candidates will create their own Gradintelligence username and password which they will be able to continue using to log in to Gradintelligence after they have left the University.

Section 13 Useful documents and links

13.1 Related policies and procedures

- [Regulations for Research Degrees](#)
- [Learning Outcomes](#)
- Code of Practice for Research Degrees
- [Criteria for Examiners and Independent Chairs](#)
- [Policy and Guidance on Recording of Oral Examinations](#)
- [Academic Misconduct Policy](#)
- [Research Misconduct Policy \(Research Students\)](#)
- [Policy on Intellectual Property Rights](#)
- [Guidance on the Use of Solely or Jointly-Authored Publications within a Thesis](#)

13.2 Additional guidance

- [Instructions to Examiners for research degree examinations – MA/MSc by Research](#)
- [Instructions to Examiners for research degree examinations – MPhil, PhD and Professional Doctorate](#)

13.3 Forms

- Application for Assessment (completed online in eVision) – please contact the PGR School if you are unable to access the form

Available from [Document Directory](#):

- Research Degree Submission Form
- Examiners' Preliminary Report Forms (First Submission)
- Examiners' Preliminary Report Forms (Resubmission)
- Examiners' Joint Report Forms (PhD / MPhil / Masters)
- Independent Chair Report
- Research Degree Deposit Form

Section 14 Record of updates to the Guide

Section	Changes made	Date approved by RDC or QSC	Notes
2.1.2 & 2.3.2	Requirement for two external examiners amended to those employed on a fixed term or permanent contract at grade 7 or above for a combined total of twelve months or more during any point in the candidature	QSC 15/2/23	
1.1.1	Removal of reference to University of Leeds regulations	Sept 2024	
5 & 6	Removal of MA/MSc by Research candidates requirement to undergo a viva (external examiner assessment only from this point)	Sept 2024	
12.5	Addition of digital certification through Gradintelligence	Sept 2024	
Various	Change from Registry to PGR School in processes	Sept 2024	
6.3	Further detail added to clarify the process when unforeseen circumstances arise.	RDC Feb 2025	
15.3	Change from 5 to 10 working days for receipt of preliminary reports	RDC Feb 2025	
12	Change from Progress and Award Examination Panel to Research Degrees Examination Panel	Jan 2025	
Various	Introduction of Student Hub	Aug 2025	
3.21	Clarification of information for submissions including sole/jointly authored publications	Aug 2025	
6.6.3	Individual participants not to make audio/video recordings, or use AI software during oral examination	Aug 2025	
7.5	PGRs entitled to 6 supervision meetings per year during resubmission period	Aug 2025	
Various	Updated links and terminology	Aug 2026	
3.11	Statement providing a 'Declaration on the use of Generative AI' added	RDC May 2026	
6.3.2	Clarification that all communications with the examination panel on the viva would be done by PGR School	Aug 2026	
7.7.3	Addition of a prize voucher for Research Excellence Recognition	RDC Feb 2026	

Section 15 Appendices

15.1 Appendix 1: Typical timeline for the Application for Assessment

Timeline	Activity
At least 4 months before submission	Preparation Candidate and Supervisory Team: • Agree the final title for the thesis and confirms that the thesis is ready for examination. • Begin completion of the online 'Application for Assessment' form via eVision. • Consider organisation of a 'mock viva' and other preparatory training for the examination (if appropriate). • Plan submission date.
3-4 months before submission	Nomination of examiners and independent chair Main Supervisor: • Identifies potential examiners. • Informally consults potential examiners for agreement. • Submits the 'Application for Assessment' form with recommendations for the appointment of examiners (along with completed consent forms). SPGRL: • Completes the nomination for the independent chair for the examination. • Confirms the nominations for the examiners. • Confirms all regulatory requirements have been met. • Confirms all ethical issues have been identified and addressed. • Submits the 'Application for Assessment' form via eVision.
3 months before submission	Approval of Application for Assessment Form and Appointment of Examiners and Independent Chair RDEP: • Considers the recommendations for examiners and independent chair. • Appoints the examiners and independent chair. PGR School: • Checks the contents of the 'Application for Assessment' form in line with the 'Criteria for the appointment of examiners and independent chairs'. • Notifies the examiners and independent chair of their appointment. • Receives confirmation of acceptance from the examiners and independent chair. • Confirms with the examiners whether any softbound copies of the thesis are required. • Notifies the candidate of the final approved title of the thesis, the names of the appointed examiners and independent chair, and whether any softbound copies of the thesis are required (copied to the SPGRL and supervisory team).
Thesis deadline date (or before)	Submission Candidate submits the thesis.
Within 3 months of submission	Examination The PGR School organises the examination and candidate is examined.

15.2 Appendix 2: Typical timeline for the thesis submission

Timeline	Activity
At least 4 months before submission	Candidate and Main Supervisor: - Plan the date for submission. - Plan for the oral examination.
At least 3 months before submission	Candidate: - Reads the University's requirements for presentation and submission of the thesis. - Receives advice from their supervisory team on the submission format. - Submits the final text to their supervisory team for comment and advice. - Considers whether or not they want a member of their supervisory team to attend the oral examination.
2-3 months before submission	PGR School: - Notifies the candidate and supervisor that the examiners and independent chair have been appointed and confirms the final title of the submission approved by the RDEP. - Informs the candidate whether any softbound copies of the submission will be required.
Final month before submission	Candidate: - Finalises the text and format to meet the University requirements for presentation and submission. - Produces the eThesis in PDF format. - Arranges production of the softbound copies to meet University requirements (if needed). - Acquires copies of any publications they may have to include with the submission. - Submits the thesis (and any publications) via Moodle. - Notifies the PGR School as to whether or not they want a member of their supervisory team to attend the oral examination (as appropriate).
On receipt of submission in Moodle	PGR School: - Checks the title of the submission against the title approved by the RDEP – if the title on the submission is different from the approved title, the candidate will need to make a formal request to change the title. - Checks the presentation of the submission against the University's format requirements – if the submission does not conform to those requirements it may be returned to the candidate for action. - Checks that sufficient softbound copies are submitted. - Confirms receipt of the submission.
1-2 weeks after submission	PGR School: - Sends the submission to the examiners. - Liaises with those involved around arrangements for the examination and oversees the process. - Makes practical arrangements for the examination, including audio/video recording equipment (as appropriate).
Post submission	Candidate: Prepares with a 'mock' viva before the agreed date for the oral examination (as appropriate for those who will undergo an oral examination).
2-3 months after submission	Examination takes place Candidate is advised of the outcome and next steps.

15.3 Appendix 3: Typical schedule for an oral examination

Pre-Exam	
Ten working days before exam	Examiners submit their independent preliminary reports to the PGR School. PGR School will circulate the preliminary reports to the examiners and copy to the independent chair when all have been received.
Pre-exam meeting	Examiners and independent chair meet for their pre-exam meeting. PGR School available for queries or matters of clarification.
30-60 mins approx	Examiners and independent chair meet privately to discuss their approach to the exam and to finalise the examination questions.
15 mins prior to exam time	Candidate and supervisor (if attending) available.
Exam	
Exam start time	Independent chair: - Invites candidate and supervisor into the examination. - Explains the purpose of the audio/video recording and starts the recording. - Leads on the introductions and outlines the examination process. Examiners lead the discussion and questions with the candidate about their thesis. Independent chair ensures that: - The examination is conducted fairly and professionally. - The candidate has the opportunity to respond to questions and raise any issues they wish. - There is a comfort break in the examination as necessary.
End of oral exam	Independent chair: - Brings the examination to a close. - Switches off the audio/video recording. - Requests the candidate and supervisor to withdraw from the exam and wait to be brought back in for the outcome to be given (in approximately 30-45 minutes but may take longer).
Post-Exam	
30-45 mins approx	Independent chair: - Facilitates the examiners to reach a consensus on the recommended outcome. Internal examiner: - Ensures arrangements are agreed between the examiners for completion of their joint examiners' report and recommendation of the examination outcome.
15-30 mins after exam	The supervisor, if not present earlier for the oral examination now joins the candidate for the recommendation from the examiners (optional, if agreed by the candidate).
30-45 mins approx	Independent chair: - Invites the candidate and supervisor back into the examination. - Chairs the examiners' feedback to the candidate. - Informs the candidate of the examiners' recommendation to RDEP and their requirements for any amendments to be made to the submission. - Advises the candidate about 'what happens next'. Candidate and supervisor leave the examination.
Within one working day	Examiners finalise the joint examiners' report. Independent Chair forwards the oral recording and their report on the conduct of the examination to the PGR School. Internal Examiner sends agreed joint examiners' report to the PGR School.
Within two working days	PGR School receives the examiners' report and recommendation for RDEP approval. Once approved, a copy of the report is sent to the candidate and supervisor.