



# SENATE REGULATION 5: Research Degrees

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EngD/PhD by new route	36	60
DrPH	30	



**26.** All candidates for a research degree will be examined by at least two Examiners, one of which must be external to the University. Candidates who are current or recent members of the staff of the University must be examined by at least two External Examiners and one Internal Examiner. "Current" members of staff are defined as anyone employed by the University at any point since the date of their registration for the research degree and up to the date of their viva voce examination. The only exception to the requirement for two external examiners is where a candidate becomes employed by the University after submission of their thesis. In these circumstances, the Head of Quality Assurance may approve an exception to the requirement to appoint two external examiners". "Recent" in this context shall mean members of staff who have ceased employment with the University within the last five years.

**27.** Each External Examiner for a research degree should normally hold a position in a UK university as Professor, Reader or Senior Lecturer. The External Examiner(s) should possess specialist current knowledge in an appropriate field. If an External Examiner does not hold such a position, a case for their appointment must be made. Any prior relationship between the External Examiner(s) and the candidate or any prior knowledge of the candidate's work must be declared. The same person should not be asked to serve as an External Examiner for a research degree examination for the University within a twelve month period without the prior approval of Senate.

**28.** Members of the candidate's recorded supervisory team may not be appointed as an Internal Examiner or Independent Chair for a research degree.

**29.** Former members of Brunel staff may not be appointed as an External Examiner for a research degree of the University before a period of at least five years has elapsed since s/he was a member of staff of the University. Former members of staff of the University may not be appointed as External Examiners for a research degree of the University if they have had any previous connection with the candidate, including being in post during the candidate's period of registration for any degree of the University. Should a former member of Brunel staff be appointed as an External Examiner, Senate will determine if a second External Examiner or second Internal Examiner should be appointed as an additional safeguard.

**30.** Senate will appoint Designated Officers to resolve any disagreements which may arise between Examiners. Such Designated Officers shall be a member of the senior academic staff of the University (i.e. an Executive Dean or Pro Vice Chancellor). In the rare case of Examiners disagreeing, the matter shall be referred to an appropriate Designated Officer.

### The Examination

**31.** The examination of the thesis is deemed to have commenced once the thesis is submitted to the University, and to have been completed when the recommendation of the Examiners has been accepted by the University.

**32.** Each External and Internal Examiner shall independently complete and submit a preliminary written report prior to the *viva voce* examination, or, in cases where a viva is not to be held, prior to the determination by the Examiners of the award to be recommended. Each preliminary report:

- a) shall be between 300 and 500 words in length;
- b) shall assess the strengths and weaknesses of the thesis and indicate the main lines of enquiry to be followed in the *viva voce*;

- c) shall, if appropriate, set out reasons why no *viva voce* should be held;
- d) shall be confidential to the Examination Panel members;

**33.** *Viva voce* examinations shall normally take place within three months of the date of the submission of the thesis. The candidate will be required to present themselves for the *viva voce* examination.

#### Recommendations of the Examiners

**34.** The Examiners shall make a joint written report to Senate on the examination of the candidate and may make any of the following recommendations:

- a) Where all the Examiners are in agreement that the thesis does not meet the standards for the award and that the degree not be awarded, in exceptional circumstances, they may make a recommendation to that effect, without requiring the candidate to defend the thesis in a *viva voce*.
- b) If the thesis meets the standards for the award, and the candidate has satisfied the Examiners at the *viva voce* e

Extensions to the six-month period may be approved by the College if there are accepted extenuating circumstances. The examination of the revised thesis





- d) A critical review of between 10,000 and 15,000 words. In particular the critical review shall:
- outline the themes that give the works their defining coherence;
  - show how the works make a significant and coherent contribution to knowledge;
  - provide an assessment of the impact of the works contained in the submission;
  - justify the overarching approach and methodologies used for the works.

#### Examination and Recommendations of Examiners

**51.** The regulations set out in paragraphs 5.25-5.39 applies with the exception of 5.33f and paragraph 38. No recommendation for re-submission for the award of a research masters can be made.

**52.** In the event that the Examiners recommend that the degree be not awarded, the candidate will not normally be permitted to make a further submission until a period of one year has elapsed since the date of that recommendation being made. Following the initial submission, no candidate for the degree of PhD by published works may be examined on more than two occasion 11.576 0 Td(-)Tj-0.002 Tc -0oc. ndaJ0 Tc02.436 noti4.55-6.6 (hTwed)(m)w 0



independent assessment. In their evaluation of a submission, Examiners shall be empowered to make such enquiries as they think fit.

**62.** If all Examiners recommend the award of the degree, their reports together with a recommendation for the conferment of the award shall be submitted to the Vice-Chancellor, as Chairman of Senate. If the Examiners' reports do not unanimously recommend the award of the degree, the Pro Vice Chancellor shall consult the Vice-Chancellor and take appropriate action.

**63.** The anonymised final report(s) of the Examiners will be issued to the candidate.

**64.** One copy of the published works submitted in evidence for the award of the degree shall be retained by the University Library.



where a candidate is registered for a joint award with an institution which does not offer an MPhil degree. In such cases the candidate may be given the option to transfer to a programme leading to the degree of MPhil from Brunel University London only.

### Supervision and Progress

**76.** Candidates registered on a programme leading to a joint award shall have a supervisory team which includes at least one supervisor from each institution. The supervisor from Brunel University shall be an academic member of University staff. One supervisor in the team shall be designated as the principal supervisor. If appropriate, the principal supervisor may change depending upon the institution in which the candidate is physically located. The supervisory team may include other supervisors and/or independent mentors and should normally include at least one additional member from the institution at which a candidate is physically located, to provide additional support. The supervisors appointed shall satisfy the academic criteria for the appointment of supervisors at both institutions, and shall be approved by the normal academic route in both institutions.

**77.** The responsibilities of the supervisory team and of the candidate shall be set out in writing in the Memorandum of Agreement and in the Individual Doctoral Agreement provided to and signed by the supervisors and the candidate, and approved by the University.

**78.** Every candidate will take part in an individualised assessment of their research training needs or equivalent with their supervisor(s) at the commencement of their studies. Candidates will also be required to take part in a postgraduate student research training programme which will include generic and subject specific research training, together with generic skills training and may include a range of elements which are compulsory, optional or conditions of funding. Research training may take place at any or all of the institutions party to the joint degree, as agreed by the supervisory team and the candidate in a written training agreement. It is the responsibility of the supervisor from the University to

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Agreement. In addition, the University will comply with any statutory obligations, for example in relation to maternity/paternity leave. The maximum period of abeyance should be stipulated and will normally be in accordance with Senate Regulation 5.12. In the case of Research Council or sponsor-funded candidates, due regard should be given to Research Council or sponsor rules governing suspension of studies. Periods of abeyance shall be in accordance with Senate Regulation 5.12.9 (er)-6 (i)2.-spodwBT0

**91.** A candidate who fails to submit a corrected or revised thesis by the date set by the examiners shall normally be regarded as having failed the examination and the recommendations of the examiners shall lapse. In exceptional circumstances a revised date for submitting corrections may be approved by the partner institutions.

**92.** Where the examiners recommend that the degree be not awarded and that submission of a revised thesis be not permitted, the candidate may ask for the case to be reviewed in accordance with procedures set out in the Memorandum of Agreement.

*(Updated June 2024)*