



Late Stage Review: Guidelines

Introduction

A Late Stage Review is required of all students registered on the PhD route (it is not required for students registered on the MPhil, although it is strongly suggested that the supervisor of these students demands a similarly reflective process from the student, and provides also a mock exam). The key aims of this review are: ensuring that the research student is progressing well and on-schedule, in terms of the research, the writing, and his or her personal and professional development; and to help prepare the student for the oral examination. Please see the research degrees regulations (¶ 60-71) for the timing of the LSR, the constitution of the panel, and the possible outcomes http://www.staffs.ac.uk/assets/research_degrees_regs%201516_tcm44-87020.pdf. The research student's Faculty is responsible for organising the Late Stage Review. The research student's supervisors are responsible for informing the student of the nature of the review, and helping the student prepare the portfolio and for the interview.

Students will in most cases be informed of the provisional outcome by the panel on the day. They will be officially informed of the outcome by the Faculty, within two weeks of its ratification by the Faculty Research Degree Committee (FRDC), including a list of any conditions attached, a timescale for completion of these, and how to submit the corrections or additions. This is unless the recommendation is that the student is withdrawn, in which case the decision is made by the University Research Degrees Sub-Committee (URDSC).

Issues that arise during the interview that concern the Faculty or University's provision of research degrees, will be recorded on the report form and then raised at FRDC and as appropriate URDSC.

The Portfolio.

A Late Stage Review Portfolio will be prepared by the candidate and submitted no less than two weeks prior to the interview data; and will include the following:

- a brief overview report of between 1500 and 3000 words (not including references and appendices). The overview report should include:
 - A summary and evaluation of the research work so far, including the project design, methods employed, and results obtained. This should include discussion of the way in which previous research plans evolved, and why.
 - Plans for completion of the programme of study, with a timescale.

- Throughout the above, summaries can be brief since evidence for work completed and its contents should consist mainly of references throughout to completed chapters, artefacts or papers;
- These completed chapters, papers or artefacts (supplied in a digital form), are to be included as appendices;
- confirmation that the candidate has successfully completed the Postgraduate Certificate in Research Methods (for students registered in or before 2015);
- an updated Skills Appraisal, conducted using the Vitae RDF as a tool, of 500 to 1000 words. (For guidance on the skills appraisal, please see the guidance notes for the Early Stage Review.) Emphasis in this appraisal should be on a synoptic overview of the research student's knowledge and skills development over the preceding years (research, personal, professional and career-oriented), a full record of development opportunities taken up, and plans for the future.

A list of references should be appended.

The document should use Arial font, size 11, and 1.5 or 2 line spacing; footnotes should be used only where necessary and in general sparingly; tables and diagrams are encouraged where they aid clear communication. References should be in the University's standard Harvard style, unless an exception has been approved for your subject area.

Notes on outcomes:

- Continue to completion of PhD: This means that the portfolio and interview together present a project, plan, set of methods, and timescale, that are appropriate to the late stage of a PhD. Further, the candidate has demonstrated the ability to carry out the research and manage his or her professional development. No conditions of approval are deemed necessary. The review team can recommend to the research student minor corrections to the documentation, and can also recommend potentially useful courses of action (papers to look at, strategies to evaluate, etc.). However, these are not conditions.
- Continue to completion of PhD, subject to conditions: The review team believe it is likely that the above criteria are met, but would like to make their approval conditional on a set of changes to the portfolio. Normally, the research student will have one month to complete and submit the changes, but the panel may agree a different time-scale.
- Continue, but transfer to MPhil: The review team believe that the project is feasible, but that even with additional work, is not of doctoral standard. The student should be re-registered onto an MPhil, and allowed to continue to submission and examination. The student will be allowed the same time to completion as if he or she were carrying on with the PhD. The student may and should be given recommendations of ways to sustain the work at MPhil level, but not conditions.
- Recommendation to Withdraw: The review team believe that little significant progress has been made towards a research degree, either of MPhil or doctoral standard.

All outcomes are only recommendations and are subject to confirmation by the Faculty Research Degrees Committee (or the University Research Degrees Sub-Committee where applicable).