

ACADEMIC AWARD REGULATIONS

Regulations for the Award of the Doctor of Philosophy on the Basis of Published Work

Name of regulation :	Regulations for the Award of the Doctor of Philosophy on the Basis of Published Work
Purpose of regulation :	To describe the eligibility, application to and conferment of PhDs on the basis of already published work
Approval for this regulation given by :	Academic Board
Responsibility for its update :	Academic Registrar and Director of Student Experience
Regulation applies to :	Students who wish to register for the award of PhD on the basis of published work
Date of Approval :	May 2014
Proposed Date of Review :	May 2015

POLICY

Criteria for the Award of the Degree of PhD on the Basis of Published Work.

- 1 Staffordshire University (hereinafter referred to as 'the University') may award the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) on the basis of published work where the candidate has made an independent and original contribution to new knowledge through the discovery of new facts, demonstrated an understanding of research methods appropriate to the chosen field and has presented and defended a thesis by oral examination to the satisfaction of the examiners. The academic standards associated with the degree shall be comparable with those for the award by the University of the degree of PhD following approved programmes of supervised research.

ELIGIBILITY OF CANDIDATES

- 2 A candidate for the degree of PhD based on published work shall normally hold a first or second class honours degree of a UK University or of the former Council for National Academic Awards. An applicant holding other qualifications shall be considered on his/her merits by the University's Research Degrees Sub-Committee.

REGISTRATION AS A STUDENT OF THE UNIVERSITY

3 Enrolment and Registration

A candidate wishing to submit for the degree should apply to the appropriate Faculty and if accepted the candidate must enrol as a student of the University. The candidate must register his/her research application with the University's Research Degrees Sub-Committee.

Fees

On enrolment the candidate will pay to the University the appropriate fee. Where the prospective candidate fails to establish a *prima facie* case (regulation 6 refers), an appropriate proportion of this fee will be refunded by the University.

Intellectual Property Rights and Confidentiality Agreement

Candidates for the degree of PhD on the basis of published work are not required to enter an intellectual property agreement or a confidentiality agreement with the University at the time of enrolment.

Academic Advisor

If the University's Research Degrees Sub-Committee approves the candidate's application they will appoint at least one Academic Advisor who will be a serving member of the University.

4 PUBLISHED WORKS

Definition

For the purpose of these regulations, 'published work' shall refer to papers, chapters, monographs, books, scholarly editions of a text, enduring records of creative work (which may be in any field including fine art, design, architecture, musical composition, dance or performance) or other original artefacts.

Authentication

For the purpose of these regulations, a work shall be regarded as published work only if it is traceable through ordinary catalogues, critical reviews, abstracts or citation indices and if copies are or have been available to the general public including, for example, public exhibitions with published catalogues and public performances with published programmes. As a consequence of this requirement, reports provided exclusively for the public or private sector may not be submitted unless they have been published and are available generally. Proofs of works not yet accepted for publication shall not be submitted.

Declaration Form

Candidates shall not submit material, which has been or is being submitted in respect of another research degree at this or any other University. Candidates will provide a statement to this effect when submitting their thesis.

Co-authors

In cases where any work submitted for the degree has been written in collaboration with other persons, the candidate shall submit a statement endorsed by the co-authors and/or the candidate's relevant manager(s), indicating the approximate intellectual and practical input by the candidate into each such work. This statement shall quantify the candidate's contribution to the formulation, execution, analysis and publication of the research and shall be countersigned by the candidate's co-authors and/or manager.

5 INITIAL SUBMISSION

In order to establish a *prima facie* case, the candidate shall initially submit to his/her Faculty Research Degrees Committee documentation, which should include:

- i) a list of the published works on which the application is based;

and/or

a list of the cited creative works which are or have been in the public domain (e.g. public exhibitions with published catalogues) together with independent critical reviews of the work;

and/or

a list of the edited text(s) or collection of artefacts, which are or have been in the public domain, together with appropriate textual and explanatory annotations;

- ii) a summary, not normally exceeding 1000 words, of the contribution to knowledge represented by the published works establishing how the works constitute a coherent body of study;
- iii) a statement identifying where and when the research contributing to the published works was undertaken;
- iv) the declaration referred to in regulation 4;
- v) the statement referred to in regulation 4;

If the Faculty Research Degrees Committee approves the initial submission the University's Research Degrees Sub-Committee must then consider it. The Faculty will forward the candidate's submission to the University Administrative Officer (Research Awards).

6 PRIMA FACIE CASE

Assessors' Evaluation

Submitted documentation shall be evaluated on behalf of the University's Research Degrees Sub-Committee by at least two assessors with expertise in the candidate's field of research. Each assessor shall comment on the coherence, quality and quantity of the published works, their potential suitability for the award of the degree of PhD and the quality of the evidence for the candidate's contribution to multi-authored works. The University's Research Degrees Sub-Committee will select assessors.

Assessors' Reports

The University's Research Degrees Sub-Committee shall receive the assessors' reports and determine whether the candidate has established a *prima facie* case for the award.

Approval of the candidate's application

If the University's Research Degrees Sub-Committee confirms that a *prima facie* case for the award does exist, the candidate has 12 months from the date of approval to produce the final submission. The Committee will appoint at least one Academic Advisor for the candidate who will be a serving member of the University.

7 **EXAMINERS**

Initial Contact

The Academic Advisor, in consultation with appropriately qualified senior colleagues, shall identify at least two and not more than three potential examiners and make an initial approach to them appraising them of the subject of the candidate's published work and of the University's procedures of the appointment of examiners and conduct of examinations.

Number of Examiners

If a *prima facie* case is established, the University's Research Degrees Sub-Committee shall appoint one internal examiner and at least one external examiner and no more than two external examiners with appropriate expertise and experience.

Ineligibility

The University's Research Degrees Sub-Committee will not approve the appointment of the candidate's Academic Advisor or co-author(s) as an examiner.

Internal Examiners

An internal examiner shall be defined as an examiner who:

is a member of staff of the University (this includes all full-time, part-time, visiting or honorary staff).

University Staff as Research Degree Candidates

Where the candidate and the internal examiner are both on the permanent staff of the same establishment, two external examiners must be appointed.

External Examiners

An external examiner shall be defined as an examiner who is:

- i) independent of the University
- ii) independent of the candidate's current or any previous employer where all or part of the cited published work was carried out.

He or she shall not:

- i) have acted previously as an advisor to the candidate

- ii) be a member of staff of the University
- iii) be a member of staff of the candidate's current employer
- iv) be a member of staff of the candidate's previous employer, where all or part of the cited published work was carried out.

Former members of staff of the University or the candidate's current employer shall normally not be approved as external examiners until three years after the termination of such employment.

Approval of Examiners and Thesis Title

The title of the thesis declared by the candidate, together with the proposed examination arrangements shall be submitted to the University's Research Degrees Sub-Committee at least two months before the expected date of the examination. The examination may not take place until the examination arrangements have been approved by the University's Research Degrees Sub-Committee. In special circumstances the University's Research Degrees Sub-Committee may act independently of the Academic Advisor to appoint examiners and arrange the examination of the candidate. The approved title of the thesis may not be changed without the approval of the University's Research Degrees Sub-Committee.

Notification of Examiners' Appointment

When the University's Research Degrees Sub-Committee has approved the proposed examination arrangements, the University Administrative Officer (Research Awards) shall notify the candidate, Academic Advisor and the examiners of the approved arrangements.

The candidate will also be informed by the Faculty Administrative Officer (Research Awards) of the procedures to be followed for the submission of the thesis.

Once the examination team has been appointed by the University's Research Degrees Sub-Committee the Academic Advisor and the candidate must not have any contact with the examiners regarding the examination.

Co-authors and/or other referees are prohibited from contacting the examiners.

8 FULL SUBMISSION

Thesis Content

Following the establishment of a *prima facie* case, the candidate shall submit to the University via the University Administrative Officer

(Research Awards), one set of documentation (hereinafter referred to as the thesis) for each of the appointed examiners, each copy of which shall include:

- i) an abstract, not normally exceeding 300 words, providing a statement of the nature and scope of the work undertaken and the contribution made to the knowledge of the subject;
- ii) a critical appraisal, not normally exceeding 10,000 words, of the cited published works, which states the aims and provides a description of the research programme, an analysis of its component parts and a synthesis of the works as a coherent study. The contribution of the original works to the advancement of the field of study shall be stated and an account given of its significance.

Where the candidate's own creative work has formed a significant part or the whole of the intellectual enquiry, the critical appraisal shall clearly set the creative work, including scholarly text(s), in its relevant theoretical, historical, critical or design context. It shall also state the aims and provide a description of the research programme, an analysis of its component parts and provide a synthesis of the works as a coherent study.

The contribution of the original work to the advancement of the field of study shall be stated and an account given of its significance;

- iii) authenticated evidence of scholarly activity in accordance with regulation 5. In the case of creative work, the representation may be in other than written form (for example video, photographic record, musical score, diagrammatic representation). The works shall be numbered and correspond exactly with the list cited in accordance with regulation 5. No additional works shall be included;
- iv) the statements and declarations referred to in regulation 5.

The critical appraisal shall be written in English unless the University's Research Degrees Sub-Committee has approved otherwise. Where the published works are in a language other than English, the University's Research Degrees Sub-Committee may require a certified translation to be provided at the candidate's expense.

Contents and Title Page

Each bound copy of the submission shall contain a contents page and a title page, which includes the following information:

- i) the approved title relating to the candidate's area of research;
- ii) the full name of the candidate;

iii) the following statement:

“A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of Staffordshire University for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy Based upon Published Work”;

iv) the month and year of submission.

Format

The following requirements shall be adhered to in the format of the submitted thesis:

- i) the thesis shall be presented in A4 format unless the University’s Research Degrees Sub-Committee has approved a different format;
- ii) the thesis shall be presented on opaque white paper in double or single-sided format;
- iii) the margin at the left-hand binding edge of the page shall not be less than 40 mm; other margins shall not be less than 15 mm;
- iv) double or one-and-a-half spacing shall be used in the critical appraisal except for indented quotations or footnotes where single spacing may be used;
- v) pages shall be numbered consecutively through the critical appraisal and the copies of published, creative or scholarly works (excluding books);
- vi) the binding shall be of a fixed type so that no part of the contents can be removed or replaced. The front and rear boards shall be of sufficient rigidity to support the weight of the work when standing upright;
- vii) the outside front board shall bear, in at least 24 pt type, the title of the work, the name and initial(s) of the candidate, the qualification and the year of the submission. The same information, excluding the title of the work, shall be shown on the spine of the work, reading downwards.

Programme of Research

For the purposes of this award, the preparation of the thesis submitted by the candidate shall be deemed by the University to constitute an appropriate programme of supervised research.

Submission of Thesis

The candidate shall submit the copies of the thesis to the University Administrative Officer (Research Awards) and shall be issued with a receipt of submission. Following the submission, the candidate shall not modify the submitted thesis prior to the examination. The timing of the submission of the copies of the thesis for examination shall be at the sole discretion of the candidate.

9 ORAL EXAMINATION

Preliminary Reports

Each appointed examiner shall independently consider the candidate's thesis and provide the University Administrative Officer (Research Awards) with a preliminary report and recommendation not less than five working days prior to the day identified for the oral examination. An oral examination must be held irrespective of the provisional recommendation of the examiners.

Arrangements for Examination

A member of the University's Research Degrees Sub-Committee shall chair the oral examination. The Faculty Administrative Officer (Research Awards) will liaise with the examiners, the Chair and the candidate to agree the date, time and venue for the oral examination. The examination must take place on one of the University's campuses. All parties will be notified in writing of the agreed arrangements.

Exchange of Preliminary Reports

Prior to the oral examination, the examiners and the candidate will receive from the University Administrative Officer (Research Awards) copies of all preliminary reports and recommendations and will jointly consider any areas of concern to be evaluated during the examination.

Role of Academic Advisor

The Academic Advisor may attend the oral examination with the agreement of the candidate, but may not contribute to the discussion or the outcome of the examination.

Examiners' Responsibilities

The oral examination shall be concerned with the content of the thesis and any other matters the examiners deem to be relevant to the thesis. The examiners shall establish that the candidate has made a systematic study in a single field or a small number of related fields,

has displayed originality and independent critical powers and has thereby carried out a coherent programme of work comparable with that required for a successful traditional PhD thesis on the basis of an approved programme of research in the field concerned. They shall also satisfy themselves on the candidate's contribution to multi-authored works.

Creative Works

In the case of a candidate whose own created artefact(s) forms a significant or total part of their published works, the examiners will be required to assess the submitted documentation and, wherever possible, the artefact(s). To this end, the candidate shall, where possible, make available on the appointed day of the oral examination or earlier where appropriate, the cited artefact(s) so that the examiners can view and discuss it with the candidate as part of the oral examination process.

Examination Outcomes

Following the completion of the examination the examiners may recommend that:

- i) the Degree be awarded;
- ii) the Degree be awarded, subject to minor editorial corrections being made to the critical appraisal, which shall be completed by the candidate to the satisfaction of the internal and/or the external examiner;
- iii) the Degree not be awarded, but the candidate be permitted to submit a revised critical appraisal and/or a different selection of published material within a specified time period;
- iii) the Degree not be awarded.

Where the examiners are not in agreement, separate final reports and recommendations shall be submitted. If option ii is selected, the examiners shall, at the end of the examination, give the candidate guidance on the corrections to be made and shall agree the arrangements for the receipt and approval by them of the corrections. Candidates shall have one month from the date of the oral examination to complete the corrections and submit the required number of copies to the University Administrative Officer (Research Awards) who will arrange for the thesis to be checked.

Notification of Candidate of Outcome of Examination

Examiners may indicate informally their recommendation on the result of the examination to the candidate but they shall make it clear that the decision rests with the University's Research Degrees Sub-Committee.

Final Decision on Examination

The University's Research Degrees Sub-Committee will consider the preliminary reports and final recommendations of the examiners. Where the examiners' recommendations are not unanimous, the University's Research Degrees Sub-Committee may:

- i) accept a majority decision;
- ii) require the appointment of an additional external examiner.

Appointment of Additional Examiner

Where an additional examiner is appointed under regulation 9 he or she shall prepare an independent preliminary report on the thesis and shall conduct a further oral examination normally within three months of the first examination. The additional examiner shall not be informed of the recommendations of the other examiners. The Academic Advisor may attend the examination with the agreement of the candidate, but may not contribute to any discussion or its outcome. On receipt of the preliminary report and final recommendation of the additional examiner, the University's Research Degrees Sub-Committee will consider the recommendations of all the examiners and take a final decision to award or not to award the Degree.

Failure

Where the examiners recommend that the Degree should not be awarded, they shall prepare an agreed statement of the reasons for their recommendation, which shall be forwarded to the candidate by the University Administrative Officer (Research Awards) following its approval by the University's Research Degrees Sub-Committee.

Library Copy of Thesis

Following the award of the degree the candidate must submit one hardbound copy and one electronic copy of the final version of the thesis to the University Administrative Officer (Research Awards). The University Administrative Officer (Research Awards) will:

- (a) send a title page, contents and abstract for each PhD thesis conferred to the British Library;
- (b) send an electronic copy to the library of the University for the work to be deposited in the repository of the University and an electronic copy will be sent to the British Library Electronic Thesis On-line System (EThOS);

- (c) lodge one permanently bound copy of the thesis in the library of the University and in the library of any collaborating establishment.

10 CHEATING AND PLAGIARISM

Any investigation of allegations of cheating and plagiarism will follow the procedures set out in the University's Academic Award Regulations: Procedure for Dealing with Breaches of Assessment Regulations: Academic Dishonesty.

Where it is proven that a candidate for a research degree is guilty of plagiarism or has otherwise cheated and where this has resulted in the award of the degree of PhD by Published Work, the University reserves the right, as appropriate, either to withhold the award of the degree or to withdraw the degree.

11 RE-SUBMISSION

Candidates to whom the degree is not awarded may submit a new application, which will be subject to the requirements of regulation 5, at any time, provided that such an application contains additional published work relevant to the field of study.

12 GROUND FOR THE REVIEW OF AN EXAMINATION DECISION RELATING TO THE AWARD OF THE DEGREE OF PhD ON THE BASIS OF PUBLISHED WORK

The University recognises that following the final oral examination research degrees candidates shall have the right to request a review of the examiners' recommendation. Given the existence of procedures to resolve complaints and grievances during the period of study, alleged inadequacy of supervisory or other arrangements before the submission of the thesis is not admissible grounds for requesting a review of the examination decision.

Requests for a review are therefore permitted **only** on the following grounds:

- a) That there were medical or other circumstances affecting the candidate's performance of which the examiners were not aware at the time of the oral examination.
- b) That there is evidence of procedural irregularity in the conduct of the examination (including administrative error) of such a nature as to cause doubt as to whether the result might have been different had the irregularity not occurred.

- c) That there is evidence of unfair or improper assessment on the part of one or more of the examiners.

DISAGREEMENT WITH THE ACADEMIC JUDGEMENT OF THE EXAMINERS IN ASSESSING A STUDENT'S PERFORMANCE CANNOT IN ITSELF CONSTITUTE GROUNDS FOR A REQUEST FOR RECONSIDERATION BY THE CANDIDATE.

In the case of medical circumstances, a medical certificate will not be sufficient. A full medical report is required, the costs of which must be borne by the candidate. The report should include, where possible, the precise dates of illness and comment on the effect of the illness on the candidate on the date of and immediately prior to the examination.

In the case of procedural irregularity or of unfair or improper assessment, claims must be substantiated with evidence of the allegations made.

13 PROCEDURES FOR CONSIDERING REQUESTS FOR A REVIEW

Candidates must give notice of their request for a review normally within one month from the date of notification of the result, against which the case is to be lodged, and must submit the case for review within a further three months from the date of giving notice. A request for a review submitted after one month from the date of notification of the result must include an explanation for the late submission. The Academic Registrar and Director of Student Experience, in consultation with the Chair of the University's Research Degrees Sub-Committee (or nominee), shall determine whether late submissions will be considered.

Notice of a request for a review should be submitted in writing to the Academic Registrar and Director of Student Experience. The request must include:

- a) The candidate's full name, Faculty and the title of the thesis.
- b) Details of the examination decision, which has prompted the request for a review.
- c) The names of the candidate's supervisors.
- d) Full details of the grounds for the request with supporting evidence.
- e) If these grounds relate to illness or other extenuating factors, full and valid reasons as to why this information was not made known to the examiners prior to the examination.

The Academic Registrar and Director of Student Experience shall acknowledge receipt of a request for a review of the decision of the examiners within seven working days.

The Academic Registrar and Director of Student Experience (or nominee), together with the Chair of the University's Research Degrees Sub-Committee, shall make an assessment of the case to ascertain initially whether the request is based upon approved grounds as outlined in paragraphs 12 (a), (b) and (c). If the Chair of the University's Research Degrees Sub-Committee was involved in the supervision or examination of the candidate, the Academic Registrar and Director of Student Experience shall nominate another member of the University's Research Degrees Sub-Committee who has not been previously connected with the supervision or examination of the candidate. In making that assessment, the Academic Registrar and Director of Student Experience (or nominee) and the Chair of the University's Research Degrees Sub-Committee (or nominee) may consult the examiners, the candidate's supervisors or other persons as appropriate and may request a copy of the examiner's preliminary and final reports, together with the thesis submitted by the candidate for examination.

Should the Academic Registrar and Director of Student Experience (or nominee) and the Chair of the University's Research Degrees Sub-Committee (or nominee) establish that the request for a review is based upon approved grounds; the case must be dealt with according to the procedure in the following 3 sections. At this stage the Academic Registrar and Director of Student Experience shall inform the examiners that a request for a review has been made and told that it may be necessary to approach them on issues raised by the candidate. This procedure may involve reference to a Research Degrees Review Panel.

If the Academic Registrar and Director of Student Experience (or nominee) and the Chair of the University's Research Degrees Sub-Committee (or nominee) establish that the request for a review is not based upon approved grounds, then the candidate should receive a written explanation from the Academic Registrar and Director of Student Experience, which describes the reason or reasons why the request has been disallowed.

A) PROCEDURE FOR DEALING WITH CASES BY CANDIDATES WHOSE PERFORMANCE WAS ALLEGEDLY AFFECTED BY ILLNESS OR OTHER CIRCUMSTANCES

In a case where the candidate claims that his/her performance was adversely affected by illness or other circumstances, and, in the opinion of the Academic Registrar and Director of Student Experience (or nominee) and the Chair of the University's Research Degrees Sub-Committee (or nominee), there appears to be no prima facie case for the decision of the examiners to be reviewed, the Academic Registrar and Director of Student Experience shall write to the candidate giving reasons why the request is not supported.

Nevertheless, if the candidate wishes to pursue the matter further he/she may do so by informing the Academic Registrar and Director of Student Experience, in writing, within five working days of the date of the letter to him/her. The Academic Registrar and Director of Student Experience (or

nominee) shall then convene a meeting of the Research Degrees Review Panel.

In cases where the candidate claims that his/her performance was adversely affected by illness or other circumstances, and, in the opinion of the Academic Registrar and Director of Student Experience in consultation with the Chair of the University's Research Degrees Sub-Committee (or nominee), there appears to be a prima facie case for the decision of the examiners to be reviewed, the Academic Registrar and Director of Student Experience will advise the examiners that there are grounds to review their decision and will ask them to re-convene in order to review their decision. It will not be necessary for the Research Degrees Review Panel to meet.

The Academic Registrar and Director of Student Experience shall inform the candidate that the examiners have agreed to review their decision. The examiners, after considering the information presented to them, shall agree either to amend or to confirm their original decision.

Where the examiners agree to amend their decision, but are uncertain as to the most appropriate alternative recommendation, they may seek additional evidence of the candidate's performance through a further oral examination.

Where the examiners agree to confirm their decision, this will end the matter in cases based solely on medical circumstances.

B) PROCEDURES FOR DEALING WITH CASES WHERE THERE IS EVIDENCE OF PROCEDURAL IRREGULARITY IN THE CONDUCT OF THE EXAMINATION

The Research Degrees Review Panel will hear all such cases. Cases will be heard normally no longer than 3 months after a request for a review has been submitted by the candidate. The Academic Registrar and Director of Student Experience (or nominee) will arrange the meeting.

The Academic Registrar and Director of Student Experience shall provide the Research Degrees Review Panel with:

- a) The application for review with any supporting documentary evidence.
- b) The examiners' final report.
- c) The preliminary reports of the examiners.
- d) The regulations concerning the award of Research Degrees.
- e) Copies of any other written information considered relevant by the Academic Registrar and Director of Student Experience.

A copy of the candidate's thesis shall be made available to members of the Panel before and during the meeting of the Review Panel.

The candidate shall be invited to attend the meeting of the Research Degrees Review Panel and shall be informed of his/her right to be accompanied by a person of his/her choosing who can speak on his/her behalf. Should the candidate opt to be represented, the name, address and brief biographical details of the representative must be submitted in writing to the Academic Registrar and Director of Student Experience not less than seven days before the appointed date of the Review Panel.

The proceedings of the Review Panel shall remain confidential to members of the Panel and the University's Research Degrees Sub-Committee.

- a) The candidate (or his/her representative) shall be asked to put his/her case in the presence of the Review Panel and to call such witnesses as s/he wishes.
- b) The Review Panel will interview or receive a written response from at least one examiner with respect to the request for review.
- c) The Review Panel shall have the authority to require the internal and external members of the supervision team and any member of the University staff connected with the candidate's programme of research to present an oral or written report on the case under review.
- d) The Review Panel shall have the opportunity to ask questions of each witness called by the candidate. The candidate may agree to answer questions put by the Review Panel as s/he wishes.
- e) The candidate (or his/her representative) shall have an opportunity to respond to any statement or report made by the examiners, supervisors or members of the University staff.
- f) The candidate (or his/her representative) shall have the opportunity to sum up their case if s/he so wishes.

The Review Panel may recommend:

- a) That no grounds for a review of the examiners' decision have been established in which case the application shall be rejected.
- b) That grounds for review have been established, in which case the examiners shall be instructed by the University's Research Degrees Sub-Committee to reconsider their decision in accordance with approved regulations and procedures.

The examiners shall normally review their original decision as soon as possible after the meeting of the Research Degrees Review Panel, and normally not longer than 3 months after the meeting. The Academic

Registrar and Director of Student Experience shall inform the candidate that the examiners have been asked to review their original decision. The examiners, after duly considering the information made available to them, shall agree either to amend or confirm their original decision.

Where the examiners agree to amend their decision, but are uncertain as to the most appropriate alternative recommendation, they may seek additional evidence of the candidate's performance through a second oral examination.

The examiner's decision will be final and there shall be no further right of a request for a review by the candidate.

C) PROCEDURE FOR DEALING WITH CASES WHERE THERE IS EVIDENCE OF UNFAIR OR IMPROPER ASSESSMENT ON THE PART OF ONE OR MORE EXAMINERS

The Research Degrees Review Panel will hear all such cases. Cases will be heard normally no longer than 3 months after a request for a review has been submitted by the candidate. The Academic Registrar and Director of Student Experience (or nominee) will arrange the meeting.

The Academic Registrar and Director of Student Experience shall provide the Research Degrees Review Panel with:

- a) The application for review with any supporting documentary evidence.
- b) The examiners' final report.
- c) The preliminary reports of the examiners.
- d) The regulations concerning the award of Research Degrees.
- e) Copies of any other written information considered relevant by the Academic Registrar and Director of Student Experience.

A copy of the candidate's thesis shall be made available to members of the Panel before and during the meeting of the Review Panel.

The candidate shall be invited to attend the meeting of the Research Degrees Review Panel and shall be informed of his/her right to be accompanied by a person of his/her choosing who can speak on his/her behalf. Should the candidate opt to be represented, the name, address and brief biographical details of the representative must be submitted in writing to the Academic Registrar and Director of Student Experience not less than seven days before the appointed date of the Review Panel.

The proceedings of the Review Panel shall remain confidential to members of the Panel and the University's Research Degrees Sub-Committee.

- a) The candidate (or his/her representative) shall be asked to put his/her case in the presence of the Review Panel and to call such witnesses as he/she wishes.
- b) The Review Panel will interview or receive a written response from at least one examiner with respect to the request for review.
- c) The Review Panel shall have the authority to require the internal and external members of the supervision team and any member of the University staff connected with the candidate's programme of research to present an oral or written report on the case under review.
- d) The Review Panel shall have the opportunity to ask questions of each witness called by the candidate. The candidate may agree to answer questions put by the Review Panel if he/she wishes.
- e) The candidate (or his/her representative) shall have an opportunity to respond to any statement or report made by the examiners, supervisors or members of the University staff.
- f) The candidate (or his/her representative) shall have the opportunity to sum up their case if he/she so wishes.

The Review Panel may recommend:

- a) That no grounds for a review of the examiners' decision have been established in which case the application shall be rejected.
- b) That grounds for review have been established, in which case the examiners shall be instructed by the University's Research Degrees Sub-Committee to reconsider their decision in accordance with approved regulations and procedures.

The examiners shall normally review their original decision as soon as possible after the meeting of the Research Degrees Review Panel, and normally not longer than 3 months after the meeting. The Academic Registrar and Director of Student Experience shall inform the candidate that the examiners have been asked to review their original decision. The examiners, after duly considering the information made available to them, shall agree either to amend or confirm their original decision.

Where the examiners agree to amend their decision, but are uncertain as to the most appropriate alternative recommendation, they may seek additional evidence of the candidate's performance through a second oral examination. The examiners' decision at the end of the process is final.

Where the examiners reaffirm their original decision, the Review Panel shall re-convene.

The Research Degrees Review Panel shall normally re-convene as soon as possible after the meeting of the examiners.

The Review Panel's decision shall be either:

- a) to confirm the decision of the examiners.
- b) advise the University's Research Degrees Sub-Committee that the candidate be re-examined by different examiners on the thesis as originally submitted.

The Review Panel shall not have the authority to recommend the award of the degree.

The Secretary of the Review Panel shall communicate to the candidate the recommendation of the Review Panel in writing, with reasons, within seven working days of the conclusion of the hearing.

The recommendation of the review Panel shall be received by the University's Research Degrees Sub-Committee.

The recommendation of the Review Panel on the request for a review shall be final and there shall be no further right of review or appeal by the candidate.

MEMBERSHIP OF THE RESEARCH DEGREES REVIEW PANEL

The membership of the Research Degrees Review Panel shall be nominated by the Chair of the Academic Board and shall comprise:

- a) A Dean (without responsibility for the Faculty in which the programme of research was undertaken).
- b) The Chair of the University's Research Degrees Sub-Committee (or nominee).
- c) An appropriate external person.
- d) The Dean of the Faculty in which the programme of research is being conducted. If the Dean is involved in the supervision or examination of the candidate, he/she should nominate a member of the Faculty/School who has not been previously connected with the supervision or the examination of the candidate.
- e) Two members of the University's Research Degrees Sub-Committee with experience of supervising candidates to the successful completion of a research degree and examining research degrees

candidates and who have had no previous involvement in the review, or with the supervision or the examination of the candidate.

- f) The Academic Registrar and Director of Student Experience.

The University Administrative Officer (Research Awards) or nominated representative shall act as Secretary at the Panel.

Candidates should also consult the University's Code of Practice for Postgraduate Research Degrees.

Disabled students

If, due to a disability, you need us to make adjustments in order that you can attend an interview or hearing, please let us know in advance and we will aim to meet your individual requirements. This could mean us relocating the hearing to a more accessible venue and/or making arrangements for a communicator or advocate to be present at the hearing. To enable us to do this, please ensure that your contact the University Administrative Officer (Research Awards), Tel no. 01782 295818 or email l.c.eyre@staffs.ac.uk at least 7 working days before the date of the hearing.

Equality issues have been taken into account during the development of this policy and all protected characteristics have been considered as part of the Equality Analysis undertaken.