

## PhD by Published Work: **RETROSPECTIVE ROUTE REGULATIONS**

Unless otherwise stated in these regulations, the [overarching PhD Regulations<sup>1</sup>](#) apply. For further guidance, please [contact the Graduate School Team](#).

### Criteria for award

1.1 The criteria for award are as set out in the PhD Regulations (left hand column of the table below). Candidates demonstrate they meet these criteria through the following mechanisms (right hand column of the table below).

PhD criteria	Assessed by
<b>Knowledge and understanding</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A critical and detailed knowledge at the forefront of the specialist area of study, with the ability to provide an overview of the field.</li><li>• Knowledge and understanding that is generated through personal research or equivalent work which makes a significant contribution to the development of the subject/discipline.</li><li>• The ability to develop creative and original responses to theoretical or practice-based problems and issues.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Thesis and oral examination</li><li>• Publications of appropriate level</li><li>• Personal contribution to joint publications</li></ul>
<b>Skills</b> <p>The ability to operate as a fully independent researcher and to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Use and enhance a range of complex skills and techniques at the forefront of developments within the subject.</li><li>• Design and execute research or development projects to deal with new problems and issues.</li><li>• Practise in the context of new problems and circumstances.</li><li>• Exercise a high level of autonomy and initiative</li><li>• Challenge established ideas and show initiative in shaping change and development</li><li>• Create and progress a research impact plan</li><li>• Communicate at the standard of peer reviewed, published academic work</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Research underpinning publications</li><li>• Personal contribution to joint publications</li></ul> <p>The oral examination will be particularly important in assessing the candidate's skills as an independent researcher.</p>

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<sup>1</sup> The overarching regulations cover the traditional PhD route, as well as the PhD by Creative Practice and the PhD by Publication, except where alternative arrangements are detailed in these 'Retrospective Route Regulations'.

1.2 The following definitions are used in these regulations:

**Probationary proposal**

A proposal submitted after three months (or equivalent if part-time), detailing the research question, aims (or hypothesis), research paradigm, intended outcomes and plans for publications. Successful completion leads to registration as a PhD candidate. Further information on the content of the probationary proposal and assessment process is provided in the Registration section of these regulations.

**Thesis**

The final piece of work submitted for examination. The thesis includes a critical appraisal, as well as a number of publications and other documents as listed under the Examination Regulations section of these regulations.

**Critical appraisal**

A piece of written work submitted as part of the thesis, amounting to 10,000 words, providing the rationale and theoretical context for the portfolio of published work, showing how it forms a cohesive whole at doctoral level and represents an original contribution to knowledge in the field.

**Publication**

For the purposes of these regulations, ‘publications’ include: papers in peer-reviewed journals; books or book chapters; creative works; patents; or any other works of scholarly or professional standing. To count as being ‘published’ the work must have been subject to editorial control. It must be traceable through ordinary catalogues, abstracts or citation indices or otherwise available to the general public. Work that is ‘in press’ can only be submitted within the thesis and presented for examination if it has been through the review/editorial process and has been officially accepted for publication. Letters of acceptance from editors or publishers must be presented in the thesis. In co-authored publications the candidate must provide evidence from the co-authors that they have made a significant contribution to the publication

**2 Application**

2.1 Applications may be submitted at any time of year. The PhD by Publication is open to internal and external applicants. Candidates may register only for a PhD by Publication. The option to register for an MPhil by Publication is not open.

2.2 Internal applicants should discuss the possibility of registering on the award with their line manager in the first instance, as part of Performance Enhancement Review. Internal applicants who are early career researchers might wish to discuss the possibility of working towards the PhD by Publication as a means of directing their research activity, prior to application. External applicants should discuss their plans with the Head of a relevant Research Centre before applying.

2.3 All applicants must submit an application to the University Admissions department. Standard entry criteria for the PhD will apply. The application should include a 1000-word proposal, detailing the overall research question(s), aims, intended outcomes and publication plan. Where applicable, the application should also list any prior publications,

indicating the applicant's level of individual contribution to each. Applications will be considered by the Graduate School on an individual basis, and in collaboration with supervisors and Research Centre Director candidates, as required, according to (a) the prima facie suitability of the candidate and (b) the availability of a suitable supervisory team with relevant topic and/or methodological expertise. No application may be accepted if an appropriate supervisory team cannot be identified from within the University.

### **3 Supervision**

**3.1** Each PhD candidate has a supervisory team consisting of at least two supervisors, and potentially one or more advisers. At least one of the supervisors should be a current member of academic staff. The other(s) should normally be a current member of academic staff.

**3.2** An initial supervisory team will be formed comprising the two main supervisors, at the point at which an offer of study is made and included in the offer letter to the candidate. The initial team will be suggested by the supervisors in consultation with the Doctoral Research Coordinator for the relevant School, and will be communicated to the Graduate School. The full supervisory team will be considered and approved by the Graduate School Academic Board.

**3.3** Both supervisors will normally hold a Doctorate, and will normally be active researchers with membership to a Research Centre/Institute within QMU. At least one of the two supervisors must have been a member of a previous supervisory team for at least one successful PhD or Professional Doctorate candidate.

**3.4** The supervisors' role will be:

- to advise the candidate on the selection of publications.
- to advise the candidate on the presentation of the probationary proposal.
- (following successful registration) to advise the candidate on writing the critical appraisal and preparing the thesis.
- if the candidate requests it, to accompany the candidate to the oral examination as an observer (one supervisor only).
- if necessary, to advise the candidate on amendments or resubmission.

The supervisors will also be responsible for providing advice on regulations and interfacing with University committees on the candidate's behalf.

**3.5** Regular research supervision should be held in keeping with the PhD Regulations.

**3.6** If a supervisor is absent for more than month, or is expected to be absent for more than month, a temporary supervisor must ensure research supervision continues until the original supervisor returns or a new supervisor is appointed. No major changes to the topic or publications should be made by a temporary supervisor

**3.7** If a candidate has concerns or difficulties about the supervisory relationship, they should contact the Doctoral Research Coordinator in the first instance.

3.8 Supervision of a PhD by Publication candidate shall count equally as workload effort with other doctorate supervision.

#### 4 Registration

4.1 To be formally registered, the candidate must submit a probationary proposal to the Graduate School within three months of initial matriculation.

4.2 The Graduate School will appoint a probationary panel in keeping with QMU regulations. The panel will consist of at least two members with relevant research expertise, at least one of whom will normally previously have examined a PhD by Publication. The panel members will not necessarily be subject experts but may seek the advice of an external reviewer as required.

4.3 The candidate must include the following within the probationary proposal:

- A list of the publications/works on which the probationary proposal is based.
- One copy of each publication that has been accepted for publication.
- Written statements from co-authors regarding the nature of the candidate's individual contribution (as far as possible).
- A supporting statement of approximately 2000 words detailing the research question, aims and intended outcomes, listing the candidate's publications and indicating the level of individual contribution to each publication, making the case for registration. For each publication a brief statement must be made outlining (a) the candidate's contribution to the work (if based on a co-authored publication) and (b) explaining which aspects of this contribution were at doctoral level, in terms of both (i) the quality of the output and (ii) their personal input. The statement may include evidence of pathway to impact, such as conference presentations, citations, effect on public policy, prizes or commercial recognition. The statement should also contain a list of any other published output to which the candidate has contributed. It should explain how the publications will be formed into a coherent body of work and clarify any seemingly excessive overlap between publications. Use of The Vitae Researcher Development Framework may assist the presentation of the supporting statement.

4.4 The number of publications to be included in the thesis and identified in the probationary proposal will vary across disciplines. Normally, the thesis will include three to five publications to which the candidate has made a significant contribution. Fewer publications may be required in the case of work which is solely authored. The totality of the thesis must be sufficient to indicate a substantial programme of research equivalent to that undertaken in a traditional PhD. The publications must be connected in such a way as to indicate a focussed and sustained investigative process. The candidate should **normally** be the sole or lead author on the majority of the publications.

4.5 The probationary panel members will independently assess the probationary proposal and statement and complete a preliminary report. The panel will subsequently meet with the candidate and consider the probationary assessment against published criteria. The panel will submit a joint report form to the Graduate School Academic Board within seven working days of the meeting with the candidate.

- 4.6** The panel may make one of three decisions:
- (a) Register on PhD
  - (b) Defer decision pending further information. A further meeting with the candidate may be requested at this stage.
  - (c) Advise the Graduate School Academic Board to refuse registration
- 4.7** Candidates have the right of appeal against refusal of registration. The only permissible grounds of appeal are as set out in the PhD Regulations.
- 4.8** Once registration has been approved, fees will be charged where appropriate. For internal candidates, any decision to waive or partially waive fees is the responsibility of the Dean of School.
- 4.9** The decision to accept a candidate for registration does not guarantee a successful outcome.
- 4.10** Where registration is refused, panel must supply the applicant with a written report setting out the reasons for refusal and indicating what additional work is needed. Unsuccessful candidates may reapply at any time.

## **5 Progression**

- 5.1** Applications for suspension of study, or extension may be submitted to the GSAB. Requests for suspension or extension will be considered on a case by case basis. The maximum suspension or extension that will usually be permitted is two months.
- 5.2** Under some circumstances, a candidate, in consultation with their supervisors, may determine that it would be more appropriate for them to follow the standard PhD route. Guidance on transferring from the PhD by Publication to the standard PhD can be sought on an individual basis from the Graduate School.
- 5.3** A candidate should normally reach the standard for PhD by Publication (Retrospective) within a prescribed period of study of one year following the Probationary assessment. Candidates should normally make their final submission at the end of the one year period for examination, or at the latest after a four month continuation period. A continuation fee must be paid for these additional months. The Continuation fee is a one off payment irrespective of the number of months used.

## **6 Examination**

- 6.1** The key function of the examination is to establish that both the candidate and their submission reach the standard required for the award of PhD, with respect to the criteria listed in 1.1 above. The examination has two stages: the preliminary assessment of the Thesis, followed by its defence at an oral examination.
- 6.2** The candidate must submit their final thesis within one year of registration.

**6.3** In good time prior to submitting the thesis, the candidate and supervisors should apply to the Graduate School Academic Board for approval of the examination team. The procedure for identifying and nominating examiners is as set out in the PhD Regulations.

**6.4** The PhD Regulations on composition of exam teams apply. For staff members, there will be two external examiners and one internal examiner. For all other candidates there will normally be one external and one internal examiner. The internal examiner will act as chair. At least one member of the examination team will normally have experience of examining a PhD by Publication.

The thesis consists of

- (a) Copies of the publications.
- (b) A critical appraisal, amounting to 10,000 words, providing the rationale and theoretical context for the publications, showing how they form a cohesive whole at doctoral level and represent a contribution to knowledge in the field.
- (c) Statements from co-authors, confirming the candidate's contribution to each publication.
- (d) An academic Curriculum Vitae.

No publications that will have been published more than 10 years prior to the expected thesis submission date can be considered for inclusion. Similarly, no publications can be considered for inclusion that have arisen from research previously submitted for examination for another degree. Expectations of the rigour, depth and quality of the research and its associated new contribution to knowledge are identical to those expected in other formats.

**6.5** The examiners will assess the thesis and the performance at the oral examination against the criteria set out in 1.1 above. Their judgement will not be made solely on the quality of the publications, but also on their assessment of the candidate's ability to write and act as an independent researcher. There will be five decisions available to the examiners:

- (a) Pass
- (b) Pass, subject to minor amendments to the critical appraisal, such amendments to be completed within two months
- (c) Resubmit the Thesis within six months, supported by the same publications.
- (d) Resubmit the Thesis with different or additional publications. The examiners should specify the timescale within which the amended portfolio should be submitted, up to a maximum of one full-time year or the equivalent.
- (e) Fail

**6.6** Candidates may appeal against the decision. The appeals procedure and permissible grounds of appeal are as set out in the PhD Regulations.

**6.7** Where minor amendments are specified (option b) above), these should be dealt with in accordance with the PhD Regulations.

**6.8** Resubmission shall be allowed where the examiners are satisfied that the candidate broadly meets the criteria relating to an independent researcher, but are either

dissatisfied with the quality of the thesis or feel that additional publications are required. The examiners must specify whether or not an additional oral examination will be required.

- 6.9** A candidate who fails may not reapply until a minimum of three years after the examination.
- 6.10** Following award, and prior to graduation, one electronic copy of the thesis must be lodged in the library. Advice on copyright considerations that might affect the inclusion of bound papers should be sought from the Graduate School on a case-by-case basis.