

## 18. Examination Outcomes

**18.1** Unless operating under Regulation 19, a copy of the final joint report shall be issued to the student. In the case of 18.2 b) and c) below the student will be given a written statement of the work to be done to achieve his/her degree within an agreed timescale. The criteria for assessing the degree of MA/MSc by Research/MPhil shall be in accordance with Regulation 1.3 and those for PhD shall be in accordance with Regulation 1.4.

**18.2** The final report of the examiners on the student shall recommend one of the following:

- a) the student should be awarded the degree sought;
- b) the student should be awarded the degree sought, provided that minor amendments and corrections in the submitted work are made to the satisfaction of the nominated examiner(s) within a specified period not exceeding six months from the notification of the result to the student;
- c) the student be permitted to re-submit for the degree sought and be re-examined as follows:
  - i) the thesis to be revised and if deemed satisfactory by the Examiners, the student will be exempt from further examination, oral or otherwise; or
  - ii) the thesis to be revised and the student must undergo a further oral or alternative examination; or
  - iii) the thesis is satisfactory, but the student must undergo a further oral examination or other such examination as the examiners shall specify.

In this case the examiners shall specify the maximum period open to the student to re-submit, this period is not to exceed 12 months. The maximum period shall date from the notification of the result to the student.

Examiners shall not make recommendations 18.2 c) if they are examining a student who is already re-presenting *unless* the re-presentation is the outcome of an appeal;

- d) if a student for PhD, the student should be awarded the MPhil, if appropriate, subject to corrections on the basis stated in 18.2 b) above. Examiners must only make this recommendation for positive achievement by the student in accordance with Regulation 1.3; or
- e) the student should not be awarded any degree and should be given no further opportunity of examination.

- f) the examiners may also offer a PhD student a choice between accepting an MPhil as in 18.2d) or requiring major revisions over a period of time in 18.2c) to achieve PhD. The student shall be given no more than one month to select the route that they wish to follow.

Where examiners recommend in terms set out in Regulations 18.2 b), c) or d) they must agree a list of deficiencies of the thesis and this must be communicated in writing to the student via the Graduate School Office as soon as possible and definitely within 20 days of the oral examination (excluding grammatical and typographical errors, which may be advised to the student separately).

Where the examiner recommends that a student should not be awarded the degree sought as set out in 18.2 e) above, and should have no further opportunity of examination, the examination team must complete the 'Statement of Reasons for Failure' form. If the student appeals against the outcome they will be provided with a copy of this statement, it should therefore be as practicable whilst safeguarding the confidentiality of the examining process.

Where the examination team are recommending that the student should be awarded the degree sought 'subject to minor amendments and corrections' we would ask that they consider an appropriate length of time. In some circumstances six months might be too long, and examiners are encouraged to specify a shorter time in these instances.

Before forwarding a recommendation for the award of a degree to the Graduate School Office the examiners must be satisfied that the format of thesis is in accordance with the University's regulations (see Regulation 15).

**18.3** Examiners should be aware of the distinction between the decision to pass a student subject to correction of minor amendments and the decision not to award a degree to a student but to permit the student to revise and re-present the thesis. The following aim to clarify the distinctions:

- a) one factor, among many others, in assessing a thesis is to judge whether it demonstrates satisfactorily the student's ability to produce a substantial and coherently argued report on the research. Ultimately, a successful thesis is one which is judged worthy to be lodged for public access in the Library. Nonetheless, it is not immediately clear in every case when a thesis is unsatisfactory which of the recommendations summarised in Regulation 18 above is appropriate. These guidelines are intended to aid examiners in coming to an appropriate decision in such cases;
- b) it should be borne in mind that there is a substantive difference between recommending the award subject to correction of the thesis, and not recommending the award but permitting the student to revise and re-present the thesis;

- c) a practical yardstick is whether the external examiner wishes to see the thesis again in order to check matters of substance. If he or she does so wish then the decision should be *not* to award the degree but to permit the student to revise and re-present.

If the external examiner believes the thesis can be brought to an acceptable standard and does not need his or her further inspection then it can be recommended that the student be awarded the degree subject to minor amendments. The basis for this distinction is that a student who has been permitted to revise and re-present has to have his/her thesis re-examined formally in its entirety, while a *corrected* thesis simply has the corrections checked by the examiner(s);

- d) *minor amendments* (18.2 b) can normally be taken as *correction* of minor textual errors and faults, while a deficient technical content would lead to re-submission and re-examination. For example, rewriting parts of a chapter to clarify issues would be *minor amendments*, whereas rewriting one or more complete chapters would be *major revisions*.

Generally, errors of presentation can be remedied by *minor amendments* unless they are judged as fundamentally and comprehensively impairing the argument of the thesis, which would require substantial rewriting. In such a case it would be advisable to require the student to revise and re-present, as the final form of the thesis would differ substantially from its original form and would need reassessing as a whole.

**18.4** Awards of the University are formally conferred upon Research Degree students by a representative of the Vice-Chancellor acting on behalf of the Academic Board and the Board of Governors. The Graduate School Office Head is responsible for reviewing, checking and completing the recommendation paperwork for signature by a representative of the Vice-Chancellor.