

SECTION A12

FIRST EXAMINATION

General

- 12.1 The examination for the MPhil, PhD and MD (Res) shall have two stages: firstly the submission and preliminary assessment of the thesis and secondly its defence by oral or approved alternative examination.
- 12.2 The examination for a Professional Doctorate or Professional Master's shall have three stages: first passing the taught modules which constitute Stage 1 of this award and which have to be passed before a candidate may progress to Stage 2; secondly in Stage 2, the submission and preliminary assessment of the thesis and, thirdly, its defence by oral examination or other approved alternative examination.
- 12.3 The RDSC shall ensure that all examinations are conducted, and the recommendations of the examiners are presented, wholly in accordance with Anglia Ruskin University's regulations. In any instance where the RDSC is made aware of failure to comply with all the procedures of the examination process, it may declare the examination null and void and appoint new examiners.
- 12.4 The RDSC (or its Chair, acting on behalf of the Committee) shall make a decision on the reports and recommendation(s) of the examiners in respect of the candidate. The power to confer the degree shall rest with the RDSC, acting on behalf of the Senate of Anglia Ruskin University.

Disability

- 12.5 Special arrangements may be needed for those candidates with a declared disability and may be made in accordance with the Summary of Reasonable Adjustments.

Posthumous Awards

- 12.6 The degree of Professional Master's, MPhil, PhD, MD (Res) or a Professional Doctorate may be awarded posthumously on the basis of a thesis completed by a candidate who is ready for submission for examination. In such cases the RDSC shall seek evidence that

the candidate would have been likely to have been successful had the oral examination taken place before submitting a formal recommendation to the Academic Registrar for the attention of the Senate.

Assessment Criteria for Research Degrees

12.7 The following criteria are normally used in assessing research degrees candidates and their research and examiners will need to be satisfied that:

- (a) the candidate has identified a suitable postgraduate research topic and successfully completed a programme of training in research techniques and methodology (including, where appropriate, conformity with the ethics, legal and safety requirements, as set out by Anglia Ruskin University);
- (b) the candidate has a satisfactory knowledge of the background literature and is able to relate the project to existing scholarship and research in the field;
- (c) the thesis is the candidate's own work and is presented in a satisfactory manner (grammar, punctuation, spelling, clarity of expression, logical argument and appropriate language);
- (d) the thesis contains technical apparatus (abstract, preface and acknowledgements, footnotes, references, appendices, statistical tables, diagrams, illustrations, bibliography) set out according to the conventions of the field of study;
- (e) the **MPhil thesis** displays appropriate evidence of:
 - originality and independent critical judgement and;
 - demonstrates an understanding of research methods appropriate to the chosen field;
- (f) the **PhD thesis** displays appropriate evidence of:
 - originality and independent critical judgement and;
 - constitutes a contribution to subject knowledge in the research field;

- (g) the detailed assessment criteria for the award of the Doctor of Medicine by Research are set out in Part E of these Regulations;
- (h) the detailed assessment criteria for the awards of the Professional Doctorate, Professional Master's and Postgraduate Diploma in Professional Research are set out in Part C of these Regulations.

Preliminary Assessment of the Thesis

- 12.8 The Doctoral School, shall send a copy of the thesis to each examiner normally one to three months prior to the date of the viva, together with the examiner's preliminary report form (Form RD6 or RD7) and Anglia Ruskin University's Research Degrees Regulations and the Notes of Guidance for Examiners, and ensure that the examiners are properly briefed as to their duties.
- 12.9 Each examiner will read the thesis and provide an independent preliminary report on it to the RDSC before any oral or alternative form of examination is held. In completing the preliminary report, each examiner shall consider whether the thesis provisionally satisfies the requirements of the degree (as set out in Regulation 12.7 above) and where possible shall make an appropriate provisional recommendation subject to the outcome of an oral examination.
- 12.10 The Doctoral School will make contact with any examiner that fails to return their preliminary report at least ten working days before the oral examination takes place.
- 12.11 The Doctoral School will ensure that all examiners preliminary reports are distributed to the examination team prior to the viva. Examiners are required to keep the preliminary reports confidential to the examining team prior to the viva and any breach of confidentiality will invalidate the examination.

Dispensing with the Oral Examination

- 12.12 Where all the examiners are independently of the opinion that the thesis is so unsatisfactory that no useful purpose would be served by conducting an oral examination the RDSC shall dispense with the oral examination and refer the thesis for further work. In such cases the examiners shall provide the RDSC with written guidance for the candidate concerning the deficiencies of the thesis.

- 12.13 The resubmission will count as a re-examination and be treated under the provisions of Section 13.
- 12.14 The examiners shall not recommend that a candidate fail outright (see Regulation 12.26 (k) below) without holding an oral examination.
- 12.15 The RDSC will normally agree that the resubmitted thesis should be submitted within twelve months.

Outright Failure

- 12.16 Where the RDSC decides at the oral examination that the degree be not awarded and that no re-examination be permitted, the examiners shall prepare an agreed statement of the deficiencies of the thesis and the reason for their recommendation, which shall be forwarded to the candidate by the Secretary to the RDSC.

The Oral Examination

- 12.17 It is the responsibility of the Doctoral School to make all the necessary arrangements for the oral examination. This will include agreeing the date of the oral examination and notifying the candidate, examiners, supervisors and independent Chair in writing of the date and the arrangements for the oral examination.
- 12.18 The oral examination shall not normally be arranged less than one month from the date of receipt of the thesis by the examiners in order to give the examiners a reasonable period in which to assess the work.
- 12.19 The oral examination shall normally be held in the UK (on University or Associate College premises). In exceptional and unforeseen circumstances the RDSC may give approval for the examination to take place elsewhere or abroad or by video conference.
- 12.20 Up to two members of the supervisory team (possibly for training purposes) and the Chair of the RDSC may, with the consent of the candidate, attend the oral examination as observers, but shall withdraw prior to the deliberations of the examiners on the outcome of the examination. It is not permissible for any other persons to be present in the

examination room, subject to the provisions of the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001.

- 12.21 At the end of the examination the candidate and supervisors will leave the room. The examiners or the Chair may however invite them back to clarify any outstanding issues arising from the examination.

The Role of the Chair

- 12.22 Each examination shall be chaired by an independent Chair who has attended the appropriate training. This training is provided to ensure that Chairs carry out their role rigorously, fairly, reliably and consistently. The Chair shall have a neutral role in the assessment process and take no part in the actual assessment of the thesis. The Chair will advise the examiners and/or the candidate on Anglia Ruskin University's regulations, procedures, policy and practice.

Examiners' Pre Meeting

- 12.23 Prior to the examination the examiners will meet with the independent Chair to consider their preliminary reports and the candidate's thesis. The examiners will also clarify the issues which they collectively, or independently, wish to raise with the candidate. The examiners should also agree the structure of their questioning and the time frame in which they hope to complete the oral examination.

Examiners' Action following the Examination

- 12.24 Following the oral examination the examiners shall, where they are in agreement, submit to the Doctoral School a joint report and recommendation relating to the award of the degree within 10 working days.
- 12.25 The preliminary reports and joint recommendation of the examiners shall together provide sufficiently detailed comments on the scope and quality of the work to enable the RDSC to satisfy itself that the recommendation chosen in Regulation 12.26 below is correct. Where the examiners are not in agreement, separate reports and recommendations shall be submitted.

Recommendations Available to the Examiners

12.26 Following the completion of the oral or approved alternative examination the examiners may recommend that:

- (a) The candidate may be awarded the degree;
- (b) the candidate be awarded the degree subject to minor amendments being made to the thesis (see Regulations 12.28-12.30 below);
- (c) the candidate be permitted to re-submit for the degree and be re-examined with an oral examination;
- (d) the candidate be permitted to re-submit for the degree and be re-examined without an oral examination;
- (e) in the case of a PhD examination, the candidate be awarded the degree of MPhil subject to the presentation of the thesis amended to the satisfaction of the examiners and which must meet the criteria for the award of MPhil as set out in Regulation 12.7(e) above);
- (f) in the case of a DProf examination, the candidate be awarded the degree of MProf subject to the presentation of the thesis amended to the satisfaction of the examiners and which must meet the criteria for the award of MProf as set out in Section C(b), Regulation 10.2 below;
- (g) in the case of a PhD examination, the candidate be permitted to re-submit for the degree of MPhil with an oral examination;
- (h) in the case of a DProf examination, the candidate be permitted to re-submit for the degree of MProf with an oral examination;
- (i) in the case of a PhD examination, the candidate be permitted to re-submit for the degree of MPhil without an oral examination;
- (j) in the case of a DProf examination, the candidate be permitted to re-submit for the degree of MProf without an oral examination;

- (k) the candidate be not awarded the degree and be not permitted to be re-examined (see Regulation 12.34 below).

12.27 The examiners shall inform the candidate of their recommendations to the RDSC but must make it clear that the final decision rests with the RDSC.

Minor Amendments to the Thesis

12.28 Where the examiners are satisfied that the candidate has in general reached the standard required for the degree, but consider that the candidate's thesis requires additional explanatory information or some minor amendments and corrections not so substantial as to call for the submission of a revised thesis, they may recommend that the degree be awarded subject to the candidate amending the thesis to the satisfaction of the internal and/or the external examiner(s) (Regulation 12.26 (b) above). They shall indicate to the candidate in writing what amendments and corrections are required within ten working days of the oral examination.

12.29 The candidate should be able to undertake minor amendments with minimal supervision. Minor corrections that are permissible include typographical errors, minor amendments and/or replacement of, or additions to the text, references or diagrams. Other more extensive corrections may be made as long as they do not require significant (as defined by the examiners) re-working or re-interpretation of the intellectual content of the thesis.

12.30 Where minor amendments are required (as in Regulation 12.26 (b), (e), and (f) above) the candidate must normally submit the corrected thesis within a maximum of six months from the date the examiners' feedback is sent to the candidate. The RDSC may, where there are exceptional reasons, approve an extension of this period. When candidates submit the corrected thesis they shall attach a summary of the changes they have made identifying where the changes can be found in the corrected thesis.

Other Amendments to the Thesis

12.31 For outcomes (c) – (j) above the candidate must submit the amended thesis within a maximum of twelve months from the date the examiners' feedback is sent to them.

Feedback from the Examiners to the Candidate Post-Viva

12.32 The examiners must supply the Doctoral School with a report detailing the amendments and corrections they require within ten working days of the date of the oral examination.

12.33 The Doctoral School will supply the report to the candidate within five working days of receipt from the examiners.

Failure at First Examination

12.34 Where the RDSC decides that the degree be not awarded and that no re-examination be permitted, the examiners shall prepare an agreed statement of the deficiencies of the thesis and the reason for their recommendation, which shall be forwarded to the candidate by the Secretary to the RDSC.

Where Recommendations are not Unanimous

12.35 Where the examiners' recommendations are not unanimous, the Faculty is invited to nominate an additional external examiner to consider the thesis. This nomination is considered by the Chair of the RDSC for approval by Chair's action.

12.36 Where an additional external examiner is appointed under Regulation 12.35 above, they shall prepare an independent report on the basis of the thesis and a further oral examination. That examiner will not be informed of the recommendations of the other examiners. The report from the additional examiner is considered by the Chair of the RDSC or the full Committee itself.

Conferment of the Award

12.37 The RDSC (or the Chair acting on behalf of the Subcommittee) shall receive the recommendations of the examiners and shall, if appropriate, endorse the decision to confer the award. The power to confer or not confer the award shall rest with the RDSC acting on behalf of the Research Committee and the Senate of Anglia Ruskin University.

Research Degree Certificates

- 12.38 Conferment of an award is withheld from any student who has not fulfilled a legitimate requirement of Anglia Ruskin University, including the settlement of any outstanding debt to Anglia Ruskin University or to an Associate College at which the student has studied in partial or complete fulfilment of the academic requirements of the course for which the student is registered.
- 12.39 Anglia Ruskin University provides an award certificate to each student on whom it confers an award.
- 12.40 Such certificates record:
- the name of Anglia Ruskin University;
 - the full name of the student as entered on Anglia Ruskin University's Student Record System. It is the responsibility of the student to ensure that his/her name is correctly entered;
 - the award title as defined in the Research Degrees Regulations;
 - the month and year that the RDSC, or Chair, endorses the recommendation to confer the award;
 - subject to the prior approval of the Senate, the name of any Associate College with whom Anglia Ruskin University has collaborated in relation to the named award; *[NB: this currently does not apply to any Associate College]*;
 - a reference to the existence of a transcript for Professional Doctorate awards conferred under Part C 9a) of these Regulations.
- 12.41 The certificate bears the signature of the Vice-Chancellor.
- 12.42 The Academic Registrar is responsible for the provision of all award certificates, prepared in secure conditions and in a format designed to minimise the risk of forgery.
- 12.43 The Academic Registrar is responsible for maintaining a record of the names of all recipients of an academic award conferred by Anglia Ruskin University.
- 12.44 Following the conferment of the award the candidate is invited by the Academic Registry's Assessment Service to attend a graduation ceremony.

12.45 For students registered for a Professional Doctorate award conferred under Part C (a) of these Regulations, Anglia Ruskin provides a transcript of taught Stage 1 performance. The transcript contains:

- the full name of the student as entered on Anglia Ruskin University's Student Record System. It is the responsibility of the student to ensure that this information is correctly entered;
- the award title as defined in the Research Degrees Regulations;
- a record of the outcome of every module in which the student has been assessed (whether or not the student has passed the module) with details of the module title, level, credit volume, module result and date of completion;
- where appropriate, the award conferred on the student. This may be an intermediate award rather than the award for which the student was originally registered;
- the date of publication of the transcript;
- the name of any Associate College with whom Anglia Ruskin University has collaborated in relation to the named award;
- a reference to the language of assessment for the award if this is not English⁴.

Retracting an Anglia Ruskin Award after Conferment

12.46 On rare occasions, it may become apparent that an Anglia Ruskin award has been conferred on a student who was admitted to Anglia Ruskin University on the basis of forged documents, or who has gained an unfair advantage in some other way. Alternatively, some other form of deception has occurred.

12.47 In the event that such evidence comes to light, the matter is referred to the Secretary and Clerk who considers the evidence and is responsible for determining whether a case exists against the holder of the award. Where the Secretary and Clerk considers there to be insufficient evidence, the matter is dropped and no further action is taken.

12.48 If the Secretary and Clerk considers that a case does exist, he/she discusses the matter with the Vice-Chancellor who together determine the most appropriate action to take. In reaching this decision, the Vice-Chancellor and Secretary & Clerk consider the need to maintain the integrity and reputation of Anglia Ruskin's awards and academic standards.

⁴ This reference is to satisfy the expectations contained within Section B10 of the QAA's UK Quality Code for Higher Education (December 2011). The requirement does not apply to courses (or their constituent modules) relating to the study of a foreign language where the principal language of assessment is also the language of study

Such action can include the retraction of any or all awards already conferred by Anglia Ruskin and formal notification of such action to relevant Professional Statutory and Regulatory Bodies. The Academic Registrar maintains a record of such decisions and these are reported to the next scheduled meeting of the Senate.