Guidance for referees of applications for Higher Degrees

1. The University of Cambridge may award a Higher Doctorate to a graduate of the University who has submitted work which in the opinion of the Referees:
   (i) contains significant and original contributions to the advancement of science or learning;
   (ii) gives proof of the candidate’s academic distinction; and
   (iii) entitles the candidate to be regarded as an authority in the field or fields of knowledge in which he or she has worked.

   The level of attainment for a Higher Doctorate is substantially higher than that required for the PhD degree, reflecting sustained academic achievement at the highest level. For this reason, a successful candidate should normally have a record of scholarly endeavour covering a decade or more (“sustained”), and which in the aggregate is world-leading in terms of originality, significance and rigour (“at the highest level”).

2. Each application is sent to (at least) two Referees. As a Referee you are requested to provide the following:
   (i) A report which should provide the Degree Committee with a detailed technical description of the work under examination and a full and frank assessment of its merits in the light of the criteria set out above;
   (ii) A summary report of your conclusions from which a non-expert audience may readily understand your opinion of the merit of the candidate’s work. Your summary should not be more than 150 words in length.

   When writing your reports, you may, if you think it necessary, ask the Secretary of the Board of Graduate Studies to invite the candidate to submit evidence as to the extent of his or her contribution to works published jointly with others.

   You are asked to write your reports independently and to restrict your reports to consideration of the works submitted by the candidate. Your report should conclude with a clear statement saying whether or not you recommend the award of the degree. Your reports must also be signed and submitted to the relevant Degree Committee.

3. If, after considering the Referees’ reports, the Degree Committee decides to recommend that the degree be awarded, the reports are considered by the Board of Graduate Studies. The Board will consider the reports and Degree Committee recommendation.

4. All the work submitted for a Higher Doctorate remains the property of the candidate and should be returned to the Degree Committee with your reports. You are therefore asked to refrain from making any notes in the work submitted.

5. The fee paid to a Referee is £175. The fee paid to an individual appointed to consider whether a prima facie case exists for a detailed assessment is £42. Should a prima facie assessor also subsequently act as a Referee the prima facie fee shall form part of the fee paid to the Referee.

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