

Memorandum for the Guidance of Referees of Applications for Higher Doctorates

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, contains important and original contributions to the advancement of Science or Learning, gives proof of the candidate's academic distinction, and 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 required for a Higher Doctorate is very substantially higher than that required for the Ph.D. Degree, reflecting sustained academic achievement at the highest level. For this reason, the 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'). The award of a Higher Doctorate carries great prestige within the University.
2. As a Referee, you are requested to write a report which should provide the Degree Committee, by which it is considered in the first instance, 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. You may, if you think fit, 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 report independently and to restrict your report to the works submitted by the candidate. Your report should end with a statement saying whether you recommend that the degree be awarded or not, and your report must be signed.
3. If the Degree Committee, after considering the reports from the Referees, decides to recommend that the degree awarded, the reports are next considered by the Board of Graduate Studies. This Board has members from many subjects and acts in a co-ordinating and judicial capacity. You are therefore asked to provide, in addition to your full report, a summary of your conclusions (of not more than 150 words in length), from which members of the Board, may readily understand your opinion of the merit of the candidate's work.
4. Following examination Referees' reports are sent to candidates along with the decision of the Board of Graduate Studies.
5. All the work submitted for a Higher Doctorate remains the property of the candidate and should be returned to the Secretary of the Degree Committee with your report. You are therefore asked to refrain from making marginal notes in any of the work submitted by the candidate.