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Guide for Examiners for the Degree of PhD, EdD, MSc, MLitt and MPhil by Dissertation

Board of Graduate Studies

September 2018
Thank you for agreeing to act as an Examiner for the University of Cambridge. The following notes are a guide to examination of research degrees. They should be read in conjunction with the relevant regulations which can be found in the University Ordinances (Chapters 6 & 7) available at http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/univ/so/.

This guidance covers the following research degrees:

Doctoral degrees: Doctor of Philosophy (PhD), Doctor of Education (EdD), Doctor of Engineering (EngD)
Master’s degrees: Master of Science (MSc), Master of Literature (MLitt), Master of Philosophy (MPhil) by dissertation.

1 Outline of the procedure

The examination for the research degrees normally consists of two parts:
(1) scrutiny of a thesis by two Examiners appointed by the Degree Committee, normally one Internal to the University (but not the Supervisor) and one External;
(2) an oral examination involving both examiners and the candidate.

The Degree Committee for the candidate’s Faculty manages the examination timetable and procedure normally with the assistance of the Internal Examiner.

Before the oral examination, each Examiner completes an independent report giving feedback and making recommendation of the result using the form provided. The recommendation may be provisional pending the oral).

Following the oral examination:

- The Examiners agree on a recommendation, they complete a joint report with a firm recommendation of the result. Both examiners must sign and date the joint report. If the examiners are unable to agree on a recommendation, they should follow the guidance in Section 8 below.
- The Examiners return both copies of the thesis to the candidate, unless a copy or copies are retained to check against a corrected version to be submitted by the candidate in the future. Please do not return the thesis to the Student Registry.
- The Examiners’ reports and forms should be returned to the Degree Committee immediately after the oral examination. Please do not retain these documents until corrections are completed by the candidate.

For the awards of PhD, EdD, MSc and MLitt degrees the Degree Committee considers the reports and makes a recommendation to the Board of Graduate Studies. The Board of Graduate Studies decides whether the degree should be awarded based on the reports and recommendations of the Examiners and the Degree Committee and informs the candidate of the outcome. The Examiners’ reports are released to the candidate by the Board of Graduate Studies.

For the award of MPhil by Dissertation, the Degree Committee decides whether the degree should be awarded based on the reports, and informs the candidate of the outcome. The Examiners’ reports are released to the candidate at this stage.

A candidate not approved for the Degree on first examination may be allowed to revise and resubmit a thesis for re-examination.
A candidate may make representations against a decision not to approve him or her for the Degree sought (see Section 11 for further details).

2 The nature of the degrees and the examination

PhD Degree (all subjects)
Minimum number of terms of research required: 9 by full-time study; 15 by part-time study.
The PhD is also offered as a PhD by special regulations for eligible applicants which is subject to separate regulations and assessment requirements - there is a separate guide for Examiners for this degree.

EdD Degree (Education)
Minimum number of terms of research required: 15 by part-time study.

EngD Degree (Engineering)
Minimum number of terms of research required: 9 by full-time study; 15 by part-time study.

MSc & MLitt Degrees (as appropriate to the subject area)
Minimum number of terms of research required: 6 by full-time study; 10 by part-time study.
These degrees may (in some instances) be taken in their own right by a candidate wishing to study for fewer terms than those required for the PhD, or may be offered to a candidate for the PhD Degree whose work is judged to be insufficient for that degree.

MPhil Degree by Dissertation (certain subject areas only1)
Minimum number of terms of research required: 3 by full-time study; six by part-time study.
The MPhil Degree is also available as an MPhil by Advanced Study, which includes assessments other than a thesis. The Regulations for this Degree are substantially different from those for the PhD, MSc, M.Litt and MPhil by Dissertation; there is a separate guide for Examiners for this degree.

2.1 Criteria for recommending award of research degrees
The subject of a student's research is approved by the relevant Degree Committee in the light of what it is reasonable to expect a student to complete within the minimum requirement of terms for the degree. The limitations are intended to apply to the scale and scope of work presented for examination, rather than its quality.

In forming a judgement as to the quality of the work, please pay particular attention to the extent to which the work meets the following criteria. You may wish to use these criteria to structure your report.

Doctoral degrees are awarded to those who have demonstrated all of the criteria below:

1. a significant contribution to the field of study through the creation and interpretation of new knowledge, connection of previously unrelated facts or the development of new theory or revision of older views;

1 The MPhil by dissertation is offered in the following subjects: Architecture, Asian and Middle Eastern Studies, Astronomy, Biological Anthropological Science, Biological Science, Chemical Engineering and Biotechnology, Chemistry, Earth Sciences, Education, Engineering, Geography, Land Economy, Latin-American Studies, Materials Science and Metallurgy, Medical Science, Physics, Theoretical and Applied Linguistics, Veterinary Science.
2. submission of work of a quality in whole or in part of a standard to merit publication (whether or not subsequently published);
3. provides evidence of the acquisition of knowledge and a detailed understanding of applicable techniques for research and advanced academic enquiry;
4. is of a quality and quantity to reflect three years of full-time postgraduate study/five years part-time study.

The **Master of Science** or **Master of Letters** degrees are awarded to those who have demonstrated all of the criteria below:

1. provides evidence of a useful contribution to the field of study;
2. systematic understanding of knowledge and critical awareness of current problems and/or new insights in the field of study
3. includes critical evaluation of current methodologies and wider research in the area of study;
4. provides evidence of an understanding of applicable techniques for research and advanced academic enquiry;
5. submission of work of a quality and quantity expected for two years of full-time postgraduate research and study

The **Master of Philosophy** degree is awarded to those who have demonstrated all of the criteria below:

1. provides evidence of a useful contribution to the field of study;
2. understanding of knowledge and critical awareness of current problems and/or new insights in the field of study
3. includes critical evaluation of current methodologies and wider research in the area of study;
4. provides evidence of an understanding of applicable techniques for research and advanced academic enquiry;
5. submission of work of a quality and quantity expected for one year of full-time postgraduate research and study

### 2.2 Thesis Presentation

For doctoral degrees the thesis presented for first examination may be hard bound or soft bound, but a final hard bound copy for deposit in the University Library must be produced before the candidate is permitted to proceed to the Degree. PhD students are also required to submit an electronic version of their final thesis.

For Master’s degrees the thesis presented for first examination may be hard bound or soft bound. There is no requirement for a final hard bound copy for deposit in the University Library or for an electronic version of the thesis.

The first submission of the soft-bound thesis must be fully prepared and carefully checked. Examiners are not expected to edit work but to deal with errors of fact and typographical errors that affect the meaning, as well as larger, structural issues.

### 2.3 Good practice in research

The University will deal appropriately with proven cases of plagiarism, fraud or other willful contraventions of scholarly conventions. Details of the University’s policy on plagiarism may be found at: [http://www.plagiarism.admin.cam.ac.uk/](http://www.plagiarism.admin.cam.ac.uk/). The University’s policy on Good Practice in
Research may be found at: https://www.research-operations.admin.cam.ac.uk/policies/ethics-good-practice-misconduct.

If you have doubts about the material under examination, please contact the Secretary of the Degree Committee prior to making any assessment of the work.

Examiners are asked specifically not to mark down work in a punitive way on suspicion of wrongdoing, but are asked to provide an assessment of the academic merit of the work of the candidate; this will provide a basis for the final result and for any disciplinary actions by the University.

2.4 What the thesis should include

2.4.1 Summary
The thesis must contain a Summary. For PhD degrees, copies of the summary are deposited in the University Library and are made available for copying and publication. For doctoral degrees you are asked to indicate whether you approve this as an accurate summary of the content and thrust of the thesis. If you approve the Summary, please sign the loose copy provided; if you do not approve the Summary you should indicate the amendment(s) required.

2.4.2 Published papers
A dissertation may contain previously published material as an integral part of the dissertation. This material should be set in the context of an overall dissertation (as part of a connected argument) with suitable introductory and concluding passages to link the published material to the rest of the work. Although permissible, it is not expected that a dissertation submitted for the awards of MSc, MLitt or MPhil will include published works. The amount of previously published material to include is up to each candidate, however included publications must refer to research carried out as part of a candidate’s degree and the dissertation must keep within the word limits specified by the relevant Degree Committee².

By permission of the Degree Committee, candidates for the PhD may submit a dissertation consisting of a number of previously published papers. In these cases the dissertation must also contain a substantial introductory summary statement summarising rationale; placing the work in the context of the wider field of study; clarifying the extent to which works represent a consistent body of research, and the original contribution to knowledge they make; and providing clear detail on the exact contribution of the student to each included paper. It would not be necessary for any published work to be re-written prior to inclusion in a dissertation. The amount of published material to include is up to each candidate, however with the exception of candidates for the PhD by Special Regulations the included publications must refer to research carried out as part of a candidate’s degree. All candidates must also keep within the word limits specified by the relevant Degree Committee³.

Works will be considered as ‘published’ if they are traceable in ordinary catalogue and copies are obtainable at the time of application or were at some previous time by members of the public through normal channels.

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² http://www.cambridgestudents.cam.ac.uk/your-course/examinations/graduate-exam-information/submitting-and-examination/phd-msc-mlitt/word
³ http://www.cambridgestudents.cam.ac.uk/your-course/examinations/graduate-exam-information/submitting-and-examination/phd-msc-mlitt/word
The dissertation must also be submitted in the format prescribed by the Board of Graduate Studies⁴.

2.4.3 Collaborative Research
We recognise that many research degrees are carried out within a group and that, in almost all subjects, a certain amount of collaboration is inevitable.

In every case, the candidate must indicate clearly which portions of the thesis, if any, describe work done in collaboration and to state the names of those with whom he or she has collaborated and the extent of their contribution. This may be achieved through acknowledgements, references and in the text.

In some cases, however, the degree of collaboration will be sufficient for the Board to require the candidate to seek approval, with the support of the supervisor, to include such work in the thesis. When the thesis is submitted, the Supervisor provides a statement of the candidate’s contribution to the investigation and to the authorship of any joint publications included. A copy of this statement will be made available to you and to the Degree Committee and the Board when they consider the Examiners’ reports.

If you have any doubts as to whether the contributions of others have been adequately acknowledged in the thesis by the candidate, please seek clarification at the oral examination.

2.4.4 Appendices
The thesis may also include Appendices which are relevant but do not form part of the connected argument. Candidates may be permitted to include as an appendix an audio or video recording, computer programmes or a CD. Candidates are made aware that these may not be used as a device to circumvent any given word limits.

2.4.5 Inclusion in thesis of work presented for degrees, diplomas or certificates previously awarded

Certain candidates may previously have been approved for a qualification and have been allowed to count up to three full-time terms (or five part-time terms) of their candidature for this qualification towards their current research degree. For example, a PhD student may have already been approved for an MPhil degree.

The Board of Graduate Studies does not permit the inclusion of the whole or the major part of a thesis submitted for the earlier qualification in a thesis for a subsequent qualification. However, a candidate may include such parts (including tables, diagrams etc.) of the work submitted for the earlier qualification as may form a connected part of the argument of the research thesis. The candidate must state generally in a preface and specifically in notes in the thesis the extent to which he or she has drawn on work submitted for the earlier qualification.

Please assess the quality of the thesis as a whole irrespective of the extent to which the candidate has drawn on work done for the earlier qualification.

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⁴ http://www.cambridgestudents.cam.ac.uk/your-course/examinations/graduate-exam-information/submitting-and-examination/phd-msc-mlitt/submit#softbound
3 The examination

The examination shall consist of submission of a dissertation embodying the results of the candidate’s approved course of research, and examination on the general field of knowledge within which it falls.

Examiners will assess on the extent to which the dissertation:

- is clearly written;
- fulfils the requirements for the degree.

3.1 Timetable

Examiners are asked to complete the examination with a minimum delay and if possible within two months of receipt of the thesis. If this will not be possible, you must contact the Secretary of the Degree Committee so that the candidate may be made aware and alternative arrangements may be considered. You will appreciate that candidates from overseas may face particular difficulties if their oral examinations are delayed.

The Internal Examiner will normally take the lead in arranging a mutually convenient timetable and will inform the candidate and the Degree Committee of the date and place of the oral examination.

3.2 Oral examination

3.2.1 Location and attendees

Both Examiners and the candidate must attend the oral examination. The examination will normally take place in Cambridge. In exceptional circumstances if the candidate or one of the examiners is unable to attend in person, the Degree Committee may approve the examination to be held via video conference. If you are prevented at the last minute by illness or other grave cause from attending the oral examination, please contact the Degree Committee Secretary immediately or make alternative arrangements.

At the discretion of the Degree Committee, an Independent Chair may be appointed by the Degree Committee to oversee examinations for the PhD degree (http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/students/studentregistry/staff/exams/dc/independent_chairs.html). An Independent Chair will normally be appointed:

- a) where two external examiners have been appointed neither of whom are experienced Cambridge examiners in the view of the Degree Committee;
- b) where the internal examiner is inexperienced in the view of the Degree Committee;
- c) in cases of re-examination;
- d) for any candidate for whom the Degree Committee has identified concerns regarding the examination;
- e) if the candidate has satisfied the Degree Committee that a Chair is required;
- f) in any other circumstances where the Degree Committee has satisfied itself that the appointment is required.

3.2.2 Length of examination

It should be of sufficient length to permit a thorough examination. As an approximate guide, an oral examination should normally occupy at least 90 minutes and is probably best kept to within three hours.
3.2.3 Purpose of the examination
The oral examination should allow:
- the candidate to defend his or her dissertation and clarify any matters raised by the Examiners;
- the Examiners to probe the candidate’s knowledge in the general field;
- the Examiners to assure themselves that the work presented is the candidate’s own and to clarify matters of any collaboration; and
- the Examiners to come to a definite conclusion about the outcome of the examination.

For MPhil programmes where the supplementary programme regulations state requirements for the examination, these shall be supplementary to the guidance detailed above\(^5\).

Examiners should not expect candidates to make a formal presentation unless (i) this has been agreed formally with the Degree Committee and (ii) the candidate has received advanced notice.

3.2.4 Special arrangements
Special arrangements can be made in particular cases for candidates on the grounds of disability. Examiners will be informed of any such arrangements.

3.2.5 Waiving the requirement for an oral examination
Very exceptionally (if, for example, the candidate is gravely ill), the Board of Graduate Studies may agree to waive any form of oral examination. In such cases, the Examiners should discuss the case after making independent reports in order to make a joint recommendation. If you decide that you need further information from the candidate’s supervisor, please see Section 4.1 below on how to proceed.

Also, in exceptional circumstances, the Board of Graduate Studies may allow a written examination to be substituted for an oral examination. In such cases, this will be arranged by the Examiners in consultation with the Secretary of the Degree Committee. The written examination will take place under standard examination conditions in Cambridge. Examiners may be asked to contribute to the written examination.

If the same Examiners are examining a revised and resubmitted thesis, they may elect to waive the requirement for an oral examination.

4 Reports and recommendations

This section refers primarily to the first examination of a thesis; for variations with respect to the examination of a revised and resubmitted thesis, please see Section 7.

4.1 Prior to the oral examination

Each Examiner should make an independent report on the thesis, including a recommendation of the outcome. A form is provided for this purpose (for the PhD degree this is the PhD1 form, with corresponding forms for other degrees); please contact the Degree Committee if you do not have the appropriate form.

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\(^5\) E.g. the regulations for the MPhil in Bioanthropological Science states that the thesis shall provide evidence to satisfy the examiners that a candidate can design and carry out investigations, assess and interpret the results obtained, and place the work in the wider perspectives of the subject.
Your report should provide the Degree Committee with full information about the scope and content of the thesis and its strengths and weaknesses, so that the Committee can make its own assessment of the work. The report should be signed and dated prior to the oral but is normally submitted with the other reports after the oral. Your signature validates the report, so the report should be sent to the Degree Committee as a paper copy, rather than by email.

Your recommendation (see Section 5) may be provisional if you find it necessary to suspend judgement until after the oral.

Exceptionally, circumstances may arise in which you and your fellow Examiner, having written your independent reports, agree that you are unable to make your joint report without further information about matters relevant to the candidate’s work that you cannot obtain from the thesis itself or from the oral examination. This situation may arise either before or after the oral. In such a case, you may write to the Secretary of the Degree Committee to seek such information in writing from the candidate’s Supervisor. A copy of this correspondence must be attached to your joint Examiners’ report.

4.2 After the oral examination
Following the oral examination, both Examiners should sign and date a joint report and recommendation of the result. A Form is provided for this purpose (for the PhD degree this is the PhD2 form, with corresponding forms for other degrees). Please contact the Degree Committee Office if you do not have the appropriate form.

If the candidate's performance in the oral is such as to cause you to alter a firm recommendation you have already made in your independent report, you should submit a supplementary report giving the reasons for the final recommendation reached;

If you disagree with the other Examiner in your final recommendation; please make the reasons clear in your joint report (see Section 8 for guidance).

We recognise that the oral is a useful forum for giving positive feedback as well as for discussing corrections and more serious shortcomings such that it is impossible to avoid giving the candidate at least some indication of the likely outcome. However, you are asked to exercise great discretion in deciding whether to indicate what your recommendation is likely to be. If you decide to do so, please make clear that it is a recommendation only and the official outcome will not be certain until after the Degree Committee and (for doctoral degrees) the Board of Graduate Studies have considered your Reports.

Immediately a decision is reached, the internal examiner should arrange for the following to be sent to the Secretary of the Degree Committee:
- the joint recommendation and report;
- the independent reports and recommendations for both Examiners;
- any supplementary reports or correspondence;
- both loose copies of the approved and signed summary (for doctoral degrees);
- list of corrections, if required;
- both fee/expenses claim forms with receipts attached (see Section 12).

Soft bound copies of the thesis should be returned to the candidate immediately following the oral examination, unless a copy/copies is/are needed to check corrections to be submitted at a later date.
5 The outcome

The following outcomes are available: approval, revision, failure or reserve judgement. Each outcome may have one or more options, as detailed below:

Approval

1. The thesis is satisfactory for the award of the Degree sought without correction.
2. The thesis is satisfactory for the award of the Degree sought subject to minor or straightforward corrections. Such corrections would be factual, typographic, limited in extent, and could be completed immediately or shortly after the oral examination. Candidates for the PhD, MSc or MLitt degrees have three months in which to complete corrections and submit a corrected and approved version of their thesis; candidates for the MPhil degree have three weeks in which to complete corrections and submit a corrected and approved version of their thesis. These deadlines run from the date of formal notification of the result of the examination from either the Board of Graduate Studies or the Degree Committee.
3. The thesis is satisfactory for the award of the Degree sought subject to more substantial, or less straightforward, corrections. Such corrections may be extensive but should not require major reworking or reinterpretation of the intellectual content of the thesis. Candidates for the PhD, MSc or MLitt degrees have six months in which to complete corrections and submit a corrected and approved version of their thesis; candidates for the MPhil degree have six weeks in which to complete corrections and submit a corrected and approved version of their thesis. These deadlines run from the date of formal notification of the result of the examination from either the Board of Graduate Studies or the Degree Committee.

Revision

Revision is allowed once only, so these recommendations cannot be made in the case of a re-examination (see Section 7 for guidance on the distinction between these options).

4. The thesis requires revision such that you are unable to recommend the awarding of the degree sought without a fresh examination of a revised thesis for the Degree sought.
5. (Doctoral students only). The thesis requires revision such that you are unable to recommend the awarding of the degree sought but instead recommend that the candidate has the opportunity to revise and resubmit their thesis for a fresh examination for the Degree or accept the award of a lesser degree, subject to correction if required.
6. (Doctoral students only). The thesis requires revision such that you are unable to recommend the awarding of the degree sought but recommend without a fresh examination of a revised thesis for the award of a lesser degree, subject to correction if required. This option is only available to doctoral candidates.
7. (Doctoral students only). The thesis requires revision such that you are unable to recommend the awarding of the degree sought but recommend a fresh examination of a revised thesis for the award of a lesser degree. If the thesis was submitted for the PhD, then a revised thesis for the MLitt, MSc or MPhil may be considered.

Candidates for the PhD, MSc and MLitt can be given up to 12 months in which to revise and resubmit their thesis. Candidates for the MPhil degree can be given up to 10 weeks in which to revise and resubmit their thesis.
Failure

8. Outright failure.

Reserve judgement

9. You may wish to defer your decision until the oral examination has been completed. If you have doubts about the result, which you can resolve only in the oral, you may use this recommendation; please make the reason for doing so clear in your report.

6 Managing Corrections

If the corrections needed are straightforward and relatively few in number, it is permissible for them to be carried out at or immediately after the oral. If the corrections have been made to your satisfaction at the oral, please indicate this by submitting a completed PhD3 form.

If the corrections are to be carried out after the oral, you should indicate to the candidate what corrections are required, and append a list of the corrections required to your joint report; your joint recommendation should also specify which examiner (or both) will check that the corrections have been completed satisfactorily.

The candidate can be asked to supply the corrected thesis for checking in either hard or electronic copy. When you are content that all corrections have been completed to your satisfaction you should confirm this to the Degree Committee as expeditiously as possible by completing the corrections form or if this isn’t possible by email to the Degree Committee including the following information:

• Full name of the candidate
• Your full name and whether you are the Internal or External Examiner
• A brief statement along the lines of....
I have checked (NAME OF CANDIDATE)’s corrected thesis and am satisfied he/she has made the changes recommended in the joint examiners’ report after his/her oral examination.

If you are in any doubt about the most appropriate procedure to follow, please consult the Secretary of the Degree Committee. In any event, please ensure that your joint report makes clear whether or not the required corrections have already been satisfactorily carried out.

7 Revision and resubmission, or acceptance of a lower degree

7.1 Revision

Revision is allowed on only one occasion, so this recommendation cannot be made in the examination of a revised thesis.

In distinguishing between the two possible revision recommendations, you are asked to base your decision on the extent of new work required and the ability of the candidate. If you are of the opinion that the candidate is unlikely to be able to raise the standard of the thesis to that required for the degree sought and is likely to be awarded a lower degree on the revised thesis, you are asked to indicate this in your joint report.

Together with the other Examiner you should agree the revisions you require and which will form the basis for the re-examination. We are aware that there are different views on the best way to present the findings of research and of what constitutes completeness of the presentation, and ask that revision requirements are restricted to those strictly necessary to bring the intellectual content
and quality of the thesis up to an acceptable standard for the Degree sought (see Section 2.1 above).

Please specify your agreed revision requirements as part of your joint report. The candidate and his or her supervisor will be sent copies of the Examiners’ reports from the Board of Graduate Studies or Degree Committee along with the result of the examination. Please do not give the revision advice directly to the candidate.

The candidate will have the support of a supervisor in making the revisions. Please do not agree to comment on any revisions prior to the re-examination; to do so may raise expectations that fetter your discretion in making a recommendation of the outcome.

7.2 Recommendation for a lower degree only or for no degree
On a first submission, permission to revise the thesis for the Degree sought should be denied only where:

- in the case of a PhD candidate being recommended for the MSc, MLitt or MPhil Degree, you are convinced that the candidate has effectively no chance of reaching PhD standard on a resubmission, bearing in mind the extent of new work required and the ability of the candidate. In such a case, you may require that the thesis be revised before it can be considered as being of a standard for approval for the MSc, MLitt or MPhil Degree;
- the candidate's standard of work and ability is so low as to be irremediable even for the MSc, MLitt or MPhil Degrees; in which case, you should recommend that no revision be allowed for any Degree (outright failure).

In the event of any doubt the candidate should be given the benefit of that doubt and be allowed to resubmit for the degree sought or for a lesser degree.

7.3 Examination of revised thesis
The procedures are as set out in Sections 3-4 above, subject to any notes in the paragraphs below.

A time limit will be set by the Degree Committee for the submission of the revised work; extensions to this limit may be granted at the Degree Committee’s discretion. The Degree Committee Office will inform Examiners when the revised work has been received.

You are asked to judge whether the thesis is now of a suitable standard for the award of the Degree sought. Please note that, while corrections are allowed, further revision is not (see Section 5). The extent to which the candidate has addressed the revision advice given after the first examination should be taken into account. The candidate will have been made aware that the action of addressing the points raised may not in itself necessarily be sufficient for success because the quality of the work will be judged.

Separate forms are supplied for the use of examiners of revised thesis. If you do not have the appropriate form please contact the Degree Committee.

The same Examiners are normally appointed for the examination of the revised thesis but where this cannot be the case, the arrangements differ slightly:

(a) If both Examiners also examined the thesis on its first submission
Provided the candidate’s performance in the oral examination on the first submission was satisfactory and your independent reports on the revised work clearly recommend the award of the degree sought, you may recommend that the oral on the revised thesis be waived. Please make clear whether you are content to do this in your independent report. In such a case, no joint report is required.
If however, your separate reports recommend that the candidate should not be approved for the degree, or if you are in any doubt in your recommendation, an oral examination must be held and a joint report written.

(b) If both Examiners did not previously examine the thesis on its first submission
The revision advice given by the first examiners will be made available to you. An oral examination must be held. Providing the revisions required by the first Examiners have been made to a standard commensurate with the degree sought, you should normally recommend that the degree be awarded (subject to correction if necessary); you should avoid introducing new grounds if to do so would mean that the degree sought cannot be awarded.

8 Disagreement between the two Examiners following the oral
If you cannot agree with your fellow Examiner following the oral examination you are asked to make the reasons clear in your joint report and to leave the recommendation form blank.

If you do not agree in your recommendation or if for any other reason the Degree Committee or the Board of Graduate Studies need further advice on the merit of the work submitted, the Degree Committee may appoint an additional Examiner. The third Examiner should normally be external to the University.

The additional Examiner makes an independent report on the thesis (i.e. without seeing the reports or knowing the recommendations of the other examiners) to the Degree Committee, but will not normally be expected to hold an oral examination unless the outcome is in doubt or if for any other reason an oral is deemed necessary.

9 Confidentiality of Examiners’ reports
Examiners’ reports will be made available to the candidate when he or she is informed by the Board or Degree Committee of the outcome of the examination.

Please do not release your report directly to the candidate.

If there is anything you need to convey in confidence to the Degree Committee and the Board of Graduate Studies, please do so on a separate sheet of paper marked STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL and enclose it with your report for the Degree Committee Secretary’s attention. Any matters involving a third party (for example, comments about a candidate’s supervisor) should be treated in this way.

If you have grave doubts about the quality of the thesis and wish to reserve your judgement till after the oral, you may exceptionally wish to divide your report, in the manner of a Referee’s report, into two sections on separate sheets: open comments for the candidate to receive verbatim for feedback, and confidential remarks for the Degree Committee. If you need to do this, please make sure the reports are clearly labeled.

Please be aware, however, that even reports made in confidence may be subject to a request for disclosure from the candidate. You will be asked for consent should a request be received from the candidate for the reports to be disclosed to him or her; the University will protect such data in so far as it is able within the provisions of the Data Protection Act (see also the review procedures, Section 11).

10 Restricted access to thesis
A small percentage of candidates are granted a temporary restriction of access to their thesis in order
to protect the intellectual property of the candidate, the University or a sponsor, or for other good reason that falls within one of the categories of exemption set out in the Freedom of Information Act 2000. In such cases, you may be asked to sign a confidentiality agreement relating to the contents of the thesis which will be valid for the duration of the restriction. Please consult the Secretary of the Degree Committee if you have any queries about such an arrangement.

11 Review of the results of examinations for postgraduate qualifications
Students may request a review of the results of their examination in certain circumstances:

(a) that there existed material circumstances relating directly to the examination (excluding circumstances relating to the candidate's course of research or course of study) of which the Examiners were not aware;

(b) that procedural irregularities occurred in the conduct of the examination, which were of such a nature as to cause reasonable doubt as to whether the Examiners would have reached the same conclusion had the irregularities not occurred:

(c) that there is demonstrable evidence of prejudice, bias, or inadequate assessment in the examination process.

12 Examiners' fees and expenses
The fee for each Examiner (including the holder of a University office) is currently as follows:

- Examinations for the PhD, MSc or MLitt: £165 if the Examiner takes part in the oral examination, or £100 if not.
- Examinations for the MPhil: £110 if the if the Examiner takes part in the oral examination, or £50 if not.

There is an additional fee of £38 for any Examiner taking part in any additional oral examination. Examiners' fees include VAT and no further payment by reason of that tax can be made.

If you have to travel a long distance to attend the oral, or require more than two nights' accommodation, please discuss the arrangements with the Degree Committee Secretary to make sure that your expenses are likely to be within the range allowed by the Board of Graduate Studies. The Board undertakes to meet all reasonable expenses within the limits specified on the reverse of the Expenses claim form.

Please apply for payment of the appropriate fee and for the reimbursement of expenses incurred by completing the form provided and sending it to the Secretary of the Degree Committee with your reports. Please ensure that receipts are appended to your application.

If you experience any difficulty with respect to reimbursement, please email feeandexpenseclaims@admin.cam.ac.uk