# Information for examiners, supervisors and candidates for the degree of PhD,

# EdD, DM and other qualifications at doctoral level

Note: The official regulations for higher degrees in all Faculties are given in the Quality Manual at <https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/qualitymanual/research-degree-progs/pgr-regs-higher-docs.aspx>

**Criteria for award of PhD and other qualifications at Doctoral Level**

These are awarded to students who have demonstrated:

(i) the creation and interpretation of new knowledge, through original research or other advanced scholarship, of a quality to satisfy peer review, extend the forefront of the discipline, and merit publication;
(ii) a systematic acquisition and understanding of a substantial body of knowledge which is at the forefront of an academic discipline or area of professional practice;
(iii) the general ability to conceptualise, design and implement a project for the generation of new knowledge, applications or understanding at the forefront of the discipline, and to adjust the project design in the light of unforeseen problems;
(iv) a detailed understanding of applicable techniques for research and advanced academic enquiry.

Typically, holders of the qualification will be able to:
(a) make informed judgements on complex issues in specialist fields, often in the absence of complete data, and be able to communicate their ideas and conclusions clearly and effectively to specialist and non-specialist audiences;
(b) continue to undertake pure and/or applied research and development at an advanced level, contributing substantially to the development of new techniques, ideas, or approaches;
and will have:
(c) the qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring the exercise of personal responsibility and largely autonomous initiative in complex and unpredictable situations, in professional or equivalent environments.

1. The thesis must be presented in a satisfactory manner. The subject matter must be clearly and precisely expressed, its arguments logical and intelligible, and its language appropriate. It must show that the candidate not only has ideas, but also has the power of putting them into suitable words.
2. The thesis must be the result of the candidate’s own work. This requirement does not preclude a candidate obtaining limited assistance with the routine collection and/or processing of data under guidelines and instructions clearly devised by the candidate. When such help is obtained it should be with the prior approval of the supervisor who must be satisfied that the spirit of the ‘own work’ requirement is not breached.
3. Prior publications of papers arising from the research being undertaken will not adversely prejudice the assessment of the thesis by the Examiners.
4. The *viva voce* examination is an essential and important part of the examination of the candidate. It will normally include questions designed to ascertain that the thesis embodies the candidate’s own research. It will test the candidate’s general comprehension of the field of study within which the subject of the thesis falls. It will test the candidate’s acquaintance with the general literature of the subject, knowledge of the relation of the work to the wider field of which it is a part, and the respects in which the work advances, modifies, or otherwise affects this wider field of scholarship.

**Options available to the examiners**

**Award of PhD or other award at doctoral Level**

1. The examiners may recommend the award of PhD or other award at Doctoral level without conditions.
2. If candidates have shown that they have reached the standard required for a doctoral award, but have submitted a thesis which is marred by minor errors, the Examiners may recommend the award of the degree subject to the correction by the candidate of the minor errors to the satisfaction of the Examiners. The time allowed for this will either be one month (for example, in the instance of a small number of typographical errors), or three months. The three-month period will be selected when the amendments are those not requiring external academic reassessment, e.g. extensive typographical errors, minor re-organisation of material, addition of supplementary material to clarify the content of the thesis, or removal of extraneous text. It is the responsibility of the Internal Examiner to verify that minor corrections have been made.

**Referral**

1. If candidates have presented an adequate thesis but have not shown in the *viva voce* examination that they possess the necessary knowledge of the general field of scholarship to which the thesis belongs, the Examiners may recommend that they should re-present the same thesis and submit themselves for a second *viva voce* examination.
2. If candidates have presented a thesis which, though inadequate in its present form, nevertheless contains work indicating that the standard required for a doctoral award may be reached, the Examiners may recommend that they should re-submit the thesis in a revised form, and may or may not require that they submit themselves a second time for a *viva voce* examination after a further period of study not exceeding one calendar year. If this recommendation is selected, the candidate will pay a re-submission fee and both examiners will undertake the re-examination. The Examiners may recommend that such candidates be awarded the degree of Master of Philosophy (which may be subject to minor corrections) if they are unable to undertake the further period of study. If the examiners believe that the candidate may not be able to improve the thesis to the doctoral standard as a result of re-submission, the examiners should advise the candidate of this when feedback is given following the viva voce examination, and should state that this has been done in the viva report section of the Joint Report Form.

**Failure at Doctoral Level Standard**

1. If the thesis is in the judgement of the examiners a long way below the doctoral standard with no possibility of reaching this standard after re-submission, the examiners may recommend that the candidate has failed the examination for PhD or other qualification at doctoral level, that no degree will be awarded and no re-submission be allowed. This option should only be selected by the examiners in exceptional circumstances.

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