POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH HANDBOOK

Chapter 11 – Presentation of theses/dissertations for Postgraduate Research degrees:

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This statement sets out the prescribed form for the submission of theses and dissertations for research degrees of the University. In the case of named programmes where submission takes a form other than, or includes work additional to, that described below, the presentation of submissions shall be subject to guidance prepared by the relevant Faculty, approved by the Dean of Postgraduate Research, on the appropriate form prior to advertisement of the programme, which shall be made available in the Faculty PGR handbook to applicants registered on the relevant programmes.

ORE (Open Research Exeter) is the name given to the University's institutional repository. An electronic version of the thesis/dissertation replaces the final hard-bound copy.

For students who first registered prior to October 2008 and who do not wish to submit electronically you must contact the Postgraduate Administration Office prior to submission.

1.   **Length of Theses/Dissertations**

1.1   In accordance with the Regulations and Programmes of Study:

a.   a thesis for the degree of PhD shall not normally exceed 100,000 words.

b.   a thesis for the degree of PhD (Integrated Doctor of Philosophy) shall not normally exceed 100,000 words.

c.   a thesis for the degree of EngD shall not normally exceed 100,000 words.

d.   a thesis for the degree of PhD by Publication shall not normally exceed 100,000 words, and shall include a 10,000 word integrative chapter.

e.   a dissertation for the degrees of MPhil shall not normally exceed 60,000 words.

f.   a dissertation for the degrees of MPhil by Publication shall not normally exceed 60,000 words, and shall include a 6,000 word integrative chapter.

g.   a thesis for the degree of DBA shall not normally exceed 60,000 words.

h.   a dissertation for the degree of EdD shall not normally exceed 50,000 words.

i.   a thesis for the degree of DClin Res shall not normally exceed 50,000 words.

j.   a thesis for the degree of DClin Prac shall not normally exceed 50,000 words.

k.   a thesis for the degree of DClin Prac (Res) shall not normally exceed 50,000 words.

l.   a dissertation for the degrees of DPPClinPrac and DForenPsy shall not normally exceed 18,000 words.

m.   a dissertation for the degree of DEd-Psy shall not normally exceed 40,000 words.

n.   a dissertation for the degrees of DClinPsy shall not normally exceed 14,000 words.

o.   a thesis for the degrees of MD or MS shall not normally exceed 60,000 words.

p.   a dissertation for the degree of MbyRes shall not normally exceed 40,000 words.

q.   a dissertation for the degree of MbyRes by Publication shall not normally exceed 40,000 words, and shall include a 4,000 word integrative chapter.

1.2   The above maxima are exclusive of the abstract, other preliminaries (tables of contents), footnotes, appendices and bibliography, but are inclusive of all other content, including tables, charts and captions. Please also see section 3 below for programmes and requirements for other formats of submission.

1.3   Where permission has been granted for a student to submit in an alternative format, specific guidelines for submission will be given indicating whether a commentary is

necessary and specifying, where appropriate any restrictions on the size of the thesis/dissertation. Students submitting in an alternative format remain bound by the appropriate maxima above.

2. **Content of Thesis/Dissertation**

2.1   Inclusion of previously prepared, jointly prepared work, or work submitted for a double degree, a thesis/dissertation may not include extensive unchanged material that has previously been submitted and approved for the award of a degree by this or any other University, with the exception of:

    2.1.1 the incorporation of a student's own previous work into a larger argument, for example when a Masters level dissertation in the first year of a 4-year PhD has been a lead-in to doctoral level work, provided that due acknowledgement is made.

    2.1.2 submission of work that has been prepared as part of a dual degree partnerships arrangement, where specified in the legal agreement and, where full acknowledgement of the fact that work has been submitted for more than one award is made in the thesis and on the transcript(s) and certificate(s) of award.

    2.1.3 submission of work that involves collaboration, where clarity over the input of each collaborator is clearly specified and acknowledged (e.g. where students have collaborated over the production of data) such that it is possible to individually assess the work of the student in question within their thesis.

2.2   In preparing work in any of the ways specified above the University's Code of Good Practice in the Conduct of Research and the University's Attribution Policy must be complied with.

2.3   **Inclusion of Previously Published Papers** (not relevant for DClinPsy)

    2.3.1 Theses/dissertations for postgraduate research degrees may include papers by the candidate that have been published or have been accepted or submitted for publication. Such papers should relate directly to the candidate's approved field

of study and must have been written during the period of the candidate's registration.

2.3.2 <u>For the MbyRes/MPhil/PhD by Publication only:</u> Theses/dissertations submitted for the MbyRes/MPhil/PhD by Publication include a portfolio of published work that has normally been published within the 5 years prior to a candidate's application to the programme. Candidates may also include any work published subsequent to their registration so long as all items included have been published at the point of submission.

2.3.3 The number of papers that may be included is not prescribed, but they and the other contents of the thesis/dissertation should reflect the amount, originality and level of work expected of a candidate towards a conventional thesis/dissertation.

2.3.4 Acknowledgement must be made in the thesis/dissertation by the candidate if any paper forms part of another thesis/dissertation submitted within the University or elsewhere by a co-author.

2.3.5 That a thesis/dissertation includes a paper that has been published is no guarantee that the examiners will recommend the award for which the candidate is being examined. The examiners are required to assess the quality of the whole thesis/dissertation against the criteria described in the regulations for the relevant degrees.

2.3.6 A thesis/dissertation including published papers should be presented and arranged as described in Section 5 of this procedure except that the papers may be presented in their published form. All published papers must be bound in with the other parts of the thesis/dissertation.

2.3.7 The contents of the thesis/dissertation should follow the sequence described in Section 5 , but should in addition contain an extended introduction addressing the following matters:

a.   The aims, objectives and results of the candidate's research.

b.   The research methodology where not otherwise described.

c.   The contribution made by the papers in the context of the approved field of study.

d.   A statement of the candidate's contribution to co-authored papers.

e.   A literature review.

f.   <u>For the MbyRes/MPhil/PhD by Publication only</u>: The extended introduction should comprise a chapter, to which the word limits in <u>Section 1</u> apply, which shall explain how the work forms a coherent whole and explain how it meets the award's assessment criteria.

3.   Thesis/Dissertation on an Alternative Format

3.1   Alternative format thesis application request

3.1.1   Regardless of whether they are on a named programme, which has specific submission requirements, which may differ from the norm, students are permitted to request to submit a thesis/dissertation in an alternative format.

3.1.2   Requests to submit a Doctorate in an Alternative Format must normally be made no more than 24 months after the start of the programme (pro-rata for part time students).

3.1.3   Requests to submit a Masters by Research (including MByRes and MPhil) must normally be made no more than 12 months after the start of the programme (pro-rata for part time students).

3.1.4   Requests to submit a thesis/dissertation in an alternative format must be via the application form and submitted to the <u>PGR Support Team</u>. Further guidance, including the required forms, can be found in the DC Handbook at <u>PGR Thesis by Alternative Format</u>.

3.2   Format of alternative thesis

3.2.1 An alternative format (see also 2.3 in this policy, inclusion of published papers) may include either:

   a. the presentation of part or all of the thesis in an alternative format e.g. it may be a multimedia document (e.g. an element or the thesis in its entirety, which is presented in a format appropriate perhaps for presentation at a conference).

   b. A constructed text such as a piece of art, or a record of professional practice in the form of a series of case-studies, which must be accompanied by a commentary.

3.2.2 The formats listed here are not exclusive and candidates should first discuss the matter with their supervisor should they consider there to be potential to present their thesis/dissertation differently, who will be able to offer advice on the appropriateness of different formats within the context of that discipline, and with regard specifically to how they relate to the candidate's research project.

3.2.3 When deciding the format of the thesis, there must be clear guidelines in the proposal that will confirm how the work will be submitted for examination and consideration must be given for how the research may be shared. Practical and written components of the thesis must be submitted to Examiners at the same time, alongside the commentary, to enable assessment of the work as a whole.

3.2.4 The proposal must confirm format of the final submission into the University Repository, Open Research Exeter (ORE). If the format of the work is such that storage in ORE is not possible, the proposal must make it clear how the work will be saved to the University Repository.

3.2.5 Permissions to submit the thesis in an alternative format may be given provided that by virtue of the subject:

   a. the intellectual quality of the thesis/dissertation would be enhanced.

   b. that a qualified supervisor and appropriate examiners can be appointed.

   c. the format is appropriate to the thesis/dissertation.

     d. that the format will allow the student to demonstrate their ability to meet the award criteria.

     e. or, that the alternative format is an appropriate specific arrangement to make to ensure the consistent equitable assessment of a student with disabilities.

3.2.6 When considering a request, the Faculty Director of PGR should ensure that details such as the expected format, size and scope of the thesis/dissertation are recorded.

3.3   Commentary on an alternative thesis

3.3.1 All alternative forms of submission must be accompanied by a commentary, which must meet the normal standards of presentation of a thesis/dissertation and an extended introduction addressing the following matters:

     a. The aims, objectives and results of the candidate's research.

     b. The research methodology where not otherwise described.

     c. The contribution made by the thesis/dissertation in the context of the approved field of study.

     d. A statement of the candidate's contribution to the elements of the thesis/dissertation.

     e. A literature review.

3.3.2 The commentary must normally meet the following word limits unless an exception has been approved on a programme basis:

	Minimum Word Limit	Maximum Word Limit
MbyRes	12,000	16,000
MPhil	18,000	24,000
Doctoral Programmes	30,000	40,000

3.3.3 The thesis/dissertation as a whole will normally be subject to the overall word limit applicable to the programme. Exceptions to this may apply for students whose constructed text takes a written form, where the overall word limit may be

extended. This must receive approval from the discipline Director of PGR who will take account of whether it is appropriate to the proposal (for example, in producing a novel). The revised word limit must take account of whether the project can reasonably be completed within the period of study of the programme in question.

3.3.4 The student will also be held to any limits agreed when their request to submit in an alternative format was considered.

3.4   Approval of alternative thesis format requests

3.4.1 The alternative application request form should be signed by the supervisory team and the Discipline Director of PGR.

3.4.2 The Dean of PGR shall hold responsibility for decisions taken under section 3 of this procedure but may liaise with the Faculty and Discipline Director of PGR where subject expertise for the decision making is necessary.

3.4.3 As this is an area of emerging practice, cases should be handled following consultation via email with the Doctoral College Quality Development Team.

3.4.4 The Doctoral College Quality Development Team will keep a record of all requests and their outcomes and seek to ensure consistency of practice, as far as is practical, takes place.

3.4.5 Applicants should raise such requests as part of the application process, and existing students should first discuss the matter with their supervisor, who will refer the matter to the Faculty Director of PGR.

3.4.6 Further guidance, including the required forms, can be found in the Doctoral College Student Handbook at PGR Thesis by Alternative Format.

4. Language of Thesis/Dissertation

4.1   Normally, all theses/dissertations will be submitted in English.

4.2   Submission in a language other than English:

4.2.1 Exceptionally, students are permitted to submit their thesis/dissertation in the language of study. Permission will be given provided that by virtue of the subject, the intellectual quality of the thesis/dissertation would be enhanced and that a qualified supervisor and appropriate examiners can be appointed. In considering whether such permission should be granted, no account will be taken of whether the native language of the candidate is English or a language other than English.

4.2.2 When submitting their thesis/dissertation all students must provide the abstract of the thesis/dissertation, and its title in English as well as the other approved language.

4.2.3 Permission must be sought from the Faculty Pro-Vice-Chancellor and the Dean of Postgraduate Research prior to registration and the Postgraduate Administration Team must be informed via email.

5. Presentation and Arrangement of Theses/Dissertations

5.1   Theses/dissertations should be presented in accordance with the following specifications. Failure to adhere to the specified formatting requirements may delay the examination process.

5.2   These requirements for the presentation of theses/dissertations for examination may be amended should the examiners have accessibility needs that would mean they would require a copy of the thesis/dissertation in an alternative format, for example, a large-print copy of the thesis/dissertation. In agreeing to their nomination as examiner the examiner should inform the supervisor of any accessibility needs in this regard at the time: the supervisor will then ensure that the student and the Postgraduate Administration Team are aware of these requirements. The Faculty will be responsible

for meeting any reasonable additional costs arising from the production of a hard copy thesis/dissertation in a format accessible to the examiner.

5.3   **MARGINS**: 30mm on the left and right-hand sides, 20mm on the top and bottom margins.

5.4   **TYPING**: Double or one-and-a-half spacing should be used in typescript except for indented quotations or footnotes, for which single spacing may be used.

5.5   **FONT**: Size 12 in Arial.

5.6   **NUMBERING OF PAGES**: All pages, including abstract, appendices, indices, drawings, maps, pages of photographs, etc, should be numbered consecutively in one sequence starting with the title page as page 1.

5.7   **SEQUENCE**: Material should be arranged in the following sequence:

   a.   Title Page, with declaration and Generative AI statement (if any, refer to section 5.9 below).

   b.   Abstract.

   c.   List of Contents.

   d.   List of Tables, Illustrations, etc (if any).

   e.   List of accompanying material (if any).

   f.   Author's declaration (if necessary, being a statement of the nature and extent of the author's individual contribution if the work is based on joint research).

   g.   Definitions (if any, being a list of definitions of any terms specific to the work); abbreviations (if any).

   h.   Introduction (when 2.3 above applies).

   i.   Text (divided into chapters, sections, etc).

   j.   Appendices (if any).

   k.   Glossary (if any).

   l.   Bibliography.

   m.   Index (if any).

5.8   **TITLE PAGE**: For theses/dissertations submitted for degrees of PhD (Doctor of Philosophy), PhD (Integrated Doctor of Philosophy), EngD, MD, MS, MPhil and MbyRes a title page (see TQA PGR Handbook, Chapter 11, Annex 1: Example PGR Title Page) should state the following:

[The full title (and sub-title if any) of the thesis/dissertation as approved]

Submitted by [Full Name], to the University of Exeter as a thesis/dissertation* for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy/Doctor of Engineering/Doctor of Medicine/Master of Surgery/Master of Philosophy/Masters by Research/by Publication* in [Degree Title], [month and year of submission for examination].

This thesis/dissertation* is available for Library use on the understanding that it is copyright material and that no quotation from the thesis/dissertation may be published without proper acknowledgement.

I certify that all material in this thesis/dissertation* which is not my own work has been identified and that any material that has previously been submitted and approved for the award of a degree by this or any other University has been acknowledged.

* delete as appropriate

Note:
   a. In the case of the degrees of EdD/DEd Psy and DClinPsy/DClin Res/DClin Prac/DClin Prac (Res)/DPPClinPrac (Res)/DBA/DForenPsy advice should be sought from the relevant Faculty on the exact wording of the declaration.
   b. In certifying that 'all materials in this thesis/dissertation...' students should have due regard to Section 2, above.

5.9   **GENERATIVE AI (GENAI) STATEMENT**

5.9.1 All PGRs **must** include a statement in their thesis/dissertation to declare how they have used AI in their work. The absence of any such statement will be considered a declaration that AI has not been used in preparing the work. The declaration should be included in the title page of their thesis/dissertation. PGRs are also required to keep a record of the AI that they have used and how they have used it, and this record should be included as an appendix with their work.

5.9.2 All PGRs must include one of the following statements in their thesis/dissertation:

EITHER
I confirm that I have used AI tool(s) responsibly in my work and that no content from generative AI has been presented as my own work. All generated content from AI has been acknowledged and referenced according to the University of Exeter guidelines. The use of AI throughout my research degree has been detailed in the methodology and/or recorded in a log as an appendix at the end of thesis/dissertation.
OR
I have not used any AI tools in preparing this thesis/dissertation.

5.9.3 Students will be expected to explain any content included in their thesis/dissertation, as per the Procedure for Graduate Research Students suspected of Research Misconduct and may be asked to discuss how they have used AI as part of their final viva.

5.9.4 PGRs are expected to keep a record of how they have used AI when preparing their thesis/dissertation and are advised to refer to the Guidance on the Use of Artificial Intelligence in Postgraduate Research for a template table that they can use.

5.10 **ABSTRACT**: All theses/dissertations must include an abstract of approximately 300 words bound in with each copy and placed to follow the title page.

5.11   **TABLE OF CONTENTS**: The title page and abstract should be followed immediately by the Table of Contents which should give in sequence, with page numbers, all relevant sub-divisions of the work.

5.12   **PRINTING**: The University will print examination copies for examiners where needed according to the following specifications.

5.12.1 Temporary Binding: Lettered boldly on the front with the title, surname and all initials, the degree for which the work is submitted, and the year of submission. The surname and initials of the candidate should also be shown on the spine.

5.12.2 Double-sided printing on paper that is International A4 (210mm x 297mm) or US Letter size (216mm x 279mm) within range 70 g/m 2 to 100 g/m 2.

5.12.3 Volumes: Theses/dissertations over 350 double-sided pages in length will be divided into 2 volumes and each volume will be printed with a title page showing the total number of volumes i.e. 1 of 2, 2 of 2 (see 5.7 above). Each volume will have a label on the spine showing full name, degree (i.e. PhD), month/year of submission (i.e. May 2013) and the volume number i.e. 1 of 2 or 2 of 2.

5.13   **COVID-19 IMPACT STATEMENT (Temporary Policy)**: Any research student whose registration began on or before 01 September 2021 may include a Covid-19 statement in the format set out in the TQA PGR Handbook, Chapter 11, Annex 2: Research degree theses and the impact of Covid-19 - Temporary Policy. A statement is not compulsory and should only be included where a research student wishes to highlight the impact of the pandemic on their research and the steps taken to adjust their research activities.

6.   **Format and Method of Submission for Examination**

6.1   For examination purposes, research degree theses and dissertations should be submitted in electronic format as a PDF file. Supporting material such as datasets, visual or audio material, if applicable and relevant to the thesis, may be submitted as supplementary files in any standard file format.

6.2   Theses/dissertations will be held securely and will be sent to examiners electronically through a secure portal. Examiners will be required to hold the documents securely and destroy all electronic and printed copies of theses/dissertations in their possession when the examination process is complete.

6.3   Candidates are advised to bring a copy of their thesis/dissertation for their own use to the *viva voce* examination and may arrange to print a copy or to bring an electronic copy. Candidates should note that whilst they might use a digital device to access their thesis/dissertation during their examination the use of said device for the purpose of contacting any other person during their examination, or for any other purpose which might lead to concerns relating to research misconduct, as detailed in the [TQA PGR Handbook, Chapter 13: Research Misconduct](#), is precluded.

6.4   Candidates are advised to [consult the guidance](#) for further information on the process of submission, including how to upload their PDF thesis/dissertation and supplementary materials to the electronic portal.

7.   Illustrations and Copyright Material

7.1   Most theses/dissertations will include illustrative material such as maps or photographs. Where these illustrations have not been created by the author of the thesis/dissertation, the source must be acknowledged in the caption. Where the illustration has been created by someone else, it may be subject to 'Third Party Copyright', which is material in any format to which another person or entity holds the rights.

7.2   Upon final submission of the thesis/dissertation, an electronic copy must be deposited in ORE (Open Research Exeter). If you wish to include any substantial portion of material that is subject to Third Party Copyright in your thesis/dissertation, you must obtain the written permission of the copyright holder before submitting your thesis/dissertation to ORE and attach the permission as an appendix to the thesis and list it in the table of contents.

7.3   If you have not obtained the permission of the copyright holder, you must submit two versions of your thesis/dissertation, one with and one without the third-party copyright material. The removed material should be replaced with a statement such as "this image has been removed by the author of this thesis/dissertation for copyright reasons". Further information can be found in the E-thesis Guidelines and E-thesis FAQs on the Library website.

7.4   Further guidance for teaching staff and researchers can be found in the University's Copyright Toolkit.

8.   Resubmitting your Thesis

8.1   When revising their thesis, you must ensure that amendments are presented in the way requested by the Board of Examiners in their Examination report. This may be through a document which details how the revised thesis addresses the list of amendments, through track changes with comments, or another way requested by the examiners. You are expected to provide sufficient detail to show clearly where and how all the points in the amendments list have been addressed.

8.2   You must pay the prescribed resubmission fee before/shortly after submission. The thesis will not be sent to examiners without this fee being paid.

9.   Final Submission (Deposit) into ORE following Examination

9.1   Within 4 weeks of notification that the examiners are recommending the award of the degree, candidates are required to deposit the final version of their thesis/dissertation into ORE (Open Research Exeter) E-thesis Guidelines and E-thesis FAQs are available.

9.2   When the deposit into ORE is successfully completed the student will receive email confirmation (including the persistent URL for the thesis/dissertation).