



# **Guide to the thesis examination process for Postgraduate Researchers (PGRs)**

## **Including the requirements for the format and presentation of theses for research degrees**

The Progression and Examination team in Doctoral College Operations is happy to help with any queries about the presentation of your thesis, how to use GRAD or with the examination process in general.

E-mail to [rp\\_examinations@adm.leeds.ac.uk](mailto:rp_examinations@adm.leeds.ac.uk).

This Guide is compiled by Doctoral College Operations (DCO) and updated each session. It gives details of the thesis examination process for Postgraduate Researchers (PGRs) from examination entry through to oral examination and award of the degree. It sets out the University's requirements for the format and presentation of theses and offers advice about the different stages of the process, possible outcomes, and the steps to be followed.

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Document Version History 2023/24

Author	Date
Doctoral College Operations	Version 1.0 September 2023
Doctoral College Operations	Version 2.0 April 2024: Export Control guidance added
Doctoral College Operations	Version 3.0 August 2024: Gen AI Guidance added

# 1. Overview of the thesis examination process

## **Well in advance of the date you intend to submit the thesis** (at least 4 months)

- Begin thinking about the process for examination entry and discuss with your supervisor
- Begin thinking about [preparation for your submission and examination](#).

## **At least 3 months before you intend to submit - Enter for Examination**

- Complete the Examination Entry GRAD workflow. Your Supervisor will approach Examiners. [Progression and Examinations Group](#) will consider recommendations for the examiners.

## **At the end of the standard period (but no later than the maximum time limit) –Submit your thesis**

- You must upload one PDF copy of your thesis to GRAD on or before your maximum time limit.
- DCO makes your thesis available to examiners normally within 10 working days of submission.

## **Within 3 months of your thesis being sent for examination - Attend for oral examination (viva)**

- You must complete an [oral examination](#). The **Internal Examiner** makes the arrangements for this, normally within 3 months from receiving the thesis (6 months for MD).

## **Within 4 or 12 weeks of successful viva<sup>1</sup> – Complete any minor corrections to your thesis**

- The examiners will notify you of their recommendation after the viva
- The examiners must prepare their examiners' report, which is considered at the next [Progression and Examinations Group](#) meeting. The examiners' recommendation is subject to final approval by the Group.
- If you passed subject to editorial & presentational corrections or minor deficiencies you must begin corrections and return them to the Internal Examiner, normally by the 4/12-week deadline.

## **Within 1 month of completing any corrections - Deposit your final eThesis**

- The final eThesis (including any approved corrections) must be uploaded to White Rose Etheses Online normally within 1 month of the internal examiner approving your corrections.

## **After deposit of the eThesis & approval by the Group - Publication of Pass List**

- Your name will be published on a pass list after deposit of the final thesis, confirmation from the internal examiner of any corrections, approval of the examiners' report by the Progression and Examinations Group and payment of any outstanding tuition fees to the University.

## **After your name has appeared on a pass list – Graduation and Certificates**

- Further information about the arrangements for graduation can be found on the [graduation pages of the SES website](#).

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<sup>1</sup>For other possible outcomes, including Referral/Fail – [please see later Section](#)

## 2. Examination Entry

### Examination Entry Arrangements (GRAD workflow)

At least 3 months before you plan to submit your thesis for examination, you must enter for examination by completing the examination entry workflow in GRAD<sup>2</sup>. **Entry workflows received less than 3 months prior to thesis submission may delay the dispatch of your thesis to the examiners and the viva/examination process.** Therefore, you should start thinking about examination entry and discuss arrangements with your supervisor well in advance of this deadline, as it may take time to find suitable examiners who are available to examine your thesis.

- From the main GRAD front page select “My project”.
  - On the right-hand side of your project page select “Thesis examination” and confirm you want to start the record. This opens two workflows
- (a) Examination Entry:
- You will need to confirm your thesis title, whether you have been a member of staff and provide details of ethical review and any publications
  - You can then submit the workflow to your supervisor so they can nominate the examiners.
  - You can track the progress via the status box in the workflow
- (b) Thesis Submission:
- This workflow will remain open until you are ready to submit your thesis for examination.

### Nomination and appointment of Examiners

Once you have completed your part of the workflow, it will move to your supervisor so that they may approach intended examiners and complete the recommendations for the appointment of examiners. The Graduate Board’s Progression and Examinations Group has agreed examiners. At least one internal examiner and one external examiner will be appointed. In some cases, the appointment of an independent chair may also be required. PGRs may be asked by supervisors for their views on individuals who might act as Examiners but the decision about the recommendations for appointment will be made in consultation between the supervisors and the Director of PGR Studies (DoPGRS).

The workflow is then passed to your Graduate School for checking and through to your Director of PGR Studies for approval before being submitted to DCO. The details are checked in DCO and the names of the recommended examiners are forwarded to the Progression and Examinations Group of the Graduate Board. The final decision about the appointment of Examiners is made by the Examinations Group. You should allow at least 6-8 weeks from submission of the workflow by the Director of PGR Studies for consideration by the Progression and Examinations Group.

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<sup>2</sup>PGRs registered at one of the Accredited Institutions (LTU/YSJU) must complete a paper exam entry form

### 3. Preparing for submission and examination

There is a wide range of support when you are preparing for your thesis submission and viva. You can get help and support from your Supervisor(s) and a number of other sources from across the University. Your Graduate School can offer support and advice during the thesis examination process. The Thesis Examination Section of Doctoral College Operations are also happy to help with any queries. Please [contact us by e-mail](#).

#### The advice of your supervisor(s)

You should make available to your supervisor(s), within an agreed timescale, the whole of the draft thesis for comment prior to submission. Your supervisor will read and comment on the whole of the draft thesis prior to submission, provided that it is submitted within a reasonable time. You should also consult your supervisor(s) for guidance in preparation for your oral examination. A “mock viva” may be helpful, and if so, you should again consult your supervisors.

PGRs are solely responsible for the decision to submit their work for examination and must take responsibility for the work that they submit. However, you should always seek advice from your supervisor(s) before submission and are strongly recommended not to submit against the advice of your supervisor(s), although you reserve the right to do so, providing that the standard period of study for the degree has been reached and the maximum period of study has not been exceeded.

#### Mock viva

You should consult your supervisor(s) for guidance in preparation for your viva. A “mock viva” may be helpful and if so, you should again consult your supervisors. The University provides all examiners with good practice advice on the conduct of the oral examination and you may also find it helpful to consult this [advice](#)<sup>3</sup> when preparing for your viva.

#### Assessment criteria used by the examiners

You should, at an early stage in your candidature, make yourself aware of the criteria for award of the research degree programme for which you are registered. This is the criteria that will be used by the examiners when examining the thesis. The requirements and learning outcomes for research degrees are provided in the [Ordinance and Regulations and Programmes of Study](#). For example, to qualify for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD):

*To qualify for the award of the degree of PhD the student must meet the required learning outcomes for the degree and satisfy the examiners that their achievement is of sufficient merit*

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<sup>3</sup>Included in the full Instructions to Examiners document

*and that their thesis contains evidence of originality and independent critical ability and matter suitable for publication through:*

- (a) presenting a thesis or alternative form of thesis as prescribed by the Regulations about advanced study and research; and*
- (b) presenting for an oral examination and such other tests as the examiners may prescribe.*

After the oral examination the examiners must produce a joint report which outlines their recommendation. You might find it helpful to look at the [examiners' report form](#) which describes the criteria against which your examiners will be assessing your work. For example, in the case of PhD (or other doctorate) the examiners are required to report to the University as follows:

Questions in the PhD (or other doctorate) examiners' report form

1. Briefly describe the nature and purpose of the PGR's research
2. Comment on the evidence of originality, with an indication of the nature of any such evidence
3. Comment on the evidence of independent critical ability, with an indication of the nature of any such evidence
4. Comment on the extent to which the thesis contains matter suitable for publication in appropriate peer reviewed journals or in other form as appropriate to the field of research
5. Comment on the written style and overall presentation of the thesis
6. Comment on the performance of the candidate in the oral examination

### [Covid-19: Assessment of Learning Outcomes and Covid-19 Impact Statement](#)

The University has prepared guidance for PGRs, Supervisors and Examiners on the assessment of learning outcomes. This can be [found in Annex 1](#).

### [Support for Disabled Postgraduate Researchers](#)

Please contact your Graduate School if you need to discuss any reasonable adjustments for your viva. The process for identifying and agreeing support and reasonable adjustments is set out in a [separate document](#). This document, which is intended to provide a single point of reference for PGRs and staff in Disability Services, Graduate Schools and Doctoral College Operations (DCO):

- Summarises the routine adjustments with clear precedents which can be accommodated without prior approval by the Examinations Group.
- Provides examples of adjustments which may be facilitated with prior approval by Examinations Group, with a framework and timescale for consideration of these
- Summarises the support available to all PGRs in preparation for assessment.
- Provides examples of adjustments that can be made for an online final viva.

It is recommended that discussions about any reasonable adjustments for the examination should begin as part of the examination entry process (at least 3 months before thesis



submission) which will be 4-6 months prior to the expected viva date. Your Graduate School will communicate any agreed adjustments to your examiners. Please contact your Graduate School for further advice.

### Academic Integrity advice and support

[Annex 2 of this document](#) includes further guidance on sources of support, training and advice. If you follow the principles and guidance outlined, you will ensure that the work you present for assessment meets the University's academic integrity expectations

The [academic integrity page of the Doctoral College website](#) includes advice and information on academic and research integrity, including sources of guidance, training and support. You are strongly encouraged to revisit this throughout your studies. The [University library website](#) also provides information about academic integrity and how to avoid plagiarism, which is relevant to your practice as a postgraduate researcher.

The PGR academic integrity tutorials will give you an overview of academic integrity, and what good academic practice means during your research degree at Leeds. The [PGR Academic integrity tutorial](#) is split into two parts: 'Essentials' and 'Advanced'. The advanced tutorial includes a unit on viva expectations and practice.

You must ensure that you have engaged with the support and resources highlighted and have read and understood the University's published rules and guidance on plagiarism, academic and research integrity and examination expectations. If you have any questions or are in any doubt, or if you feel that further advice and guidance is needed, please talk to your supervisor(s).

### Proof-Reading support

The [PGR Proof-Reading Policy and Guidance](#) explains in detail what work you can have proof-read and what support is permitted from a third-party proof-reader. It also includes links to the University's guidance on the use of Artificial Intelligence assistance tools by PGRs.

### Artificial Intelligence and Assistance Tools

The University has approved detailed guidance on using generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools in your research degree studies. [Annex 2 of this document](#) includes further guidance.

### Other thesis and viva preparation and support

The [Postgraduate Training and Research Skills page](#) includes details of the support available, including workshops available via Organisational Development & Professional Learning. There is also a range of support available through the researcher support pages of the [Library](#).

## 4. Format and presentation requirements for the thesis

### Text

**The thesis must be written in English**<sup>4</sup>. Theses must be presented in a clear, standard font of 11 to 12pt size. You should consult with your supervisor regarding any text/font conventions normally used in your discipline. Text that is in upper case only or in which some letters are non-standard is not acceptable as thesis text. Text must be in double or one and a half line spacing (except indented quotations or footnotes where single spacing may be used). Margins at the binding edge must be not less than 40 mm and other margins not less than 20 mm.

### Pagination

All pages must be numbered consecutively throughout including images and/or diagrams where possible. Page numbers must appear on each page, preferably at the top centre.

### Presentation of the title page

The title page must give the following information

- (a) The full title of your thesis (and sub-title if any), as submitted at examination entry.
- (b) Your full name, as held in the University's records, including all middle names.
- (c) "*Submitted in accordance with the requirements for the degree of*" with the name of the relevant degree added in full afterwards.
- (d) "The University of Leeds" followed by either<sup>5</sup>:
  - the name of the School in which you were registered and supervised; or
  - if you received formal supervision in two Schools (one of which was your parent registration School) you can include the names of both Schools if you wish; or
  - the name of the academic Centre or Unit in which the research was conducted (after permission has been obtained from the DoPGRS in your parent registration school)
- (e) The month and year of submission **for examination**.

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<sup>4</sup> With the exception of research degrees in the modern languages, where, in certain circumstances approved by the Graduate Board, a thesis may be submitted in a language other than English.

<sup>5</sup> in the case of PGRs registered at accredited institutions the "University of Leeds" followed by the name of the Institution together with the name of the school within the institution

## Second Page (Intellectual Property and Publication Statements)

The second page of the thesis should give the following information:

(a) One of the following statements: either

(i) **If there are no jointly authored publications** from the thesis:

I confirm that the work submitted is my own and that appropriate credit has been given where reference has been made to the work of others.

(ii) **If there are jointly-authored publications** which have been used in the thesis:<sup>6</sup>

I confirm that the work submitted is my own, except where work which has formed part of jointly authored publications has been included. My contribution and the other authors to this work has been explicitly indicated below. I confirm that appropriate credit has been given within the thesis where reference has been made to the work of others.

You must then also include on this page of your thesis details of:

- Which chapters are based on work from jointly authored publications.
- The publications which have been used (title, authors, date, journals).
- The work within the publications which is directly attributable to you; and
- The contributions of the other authors to the work.<sup>7</sup>

(c) A statement as follows: *“This copy has been supplied on the understanding that it is copyright material and that no quotation from the thesis may be published without proper acknowledgement”*<sup>8</sup>

(d) Optional - Assertion of moral rights. If you wish to assert your moral right to be identified as the author of the work insert the following: *“The right of <your full name> to be identified as Author of this work has been asserted by <your full name> in accordance with the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.”*

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<sup>6</sup>See the [Guidelines on the Use of Solely or Jointly Authored Publications within a Thesis Submission](#)

<sup>7</sup>PGRs submitting an alternative style of doctoral thesis including published material must also include a brief rationale for submitting an alternative format thesis and a brief summary of the thesis structure

<sup>8</sup>See the [Intellectual Property Rights Policy](#)

## Acknowledgements page

This page should contain any acknowledgements to those who have assisted with your work, for example your supervisor(s), sponsor(s) etc. You will need to use your acknowledgements page of your thesis to recognise and credit those who have assisted with your work, and any specialist assistance or advice which may have been given, for example in the analysis of data. Your acknowledgements page may include personal thanks to those who have supported you in your studies, but if choosing to include personal mentions please bear in mind that your final thesis will be [deposited and publicly available in White Rose Etheses Online](#).

**Where work is the result of collaborative research**, the contribution of collaborators must be clearly stated as part of your thesis acknowledgements.

**Where you have worked as part of a team** you should include a specific statement as follows: *“This research has been carried out by a team which has included (name the individuals). My own contributions, fully and explicitly indicated in the thesis, have been.....(please specify)”* The other members of the group and their contributions have been as follows: (please specify)”

**If your thesis was proof-read by a third-party proof-reader** before submission (or following corrections) the following statement must be added: *The thesis was proof-read before submission by a third-party proof-reader. The PGR confirms that the third-party proof-reading undertaken was in accordance with the Postgraduate Researcher Proof-reading Policy.*

**If you made use of Artificial Intelligence assistance** tools the minimum requirement to include in acknowledgement are:

- Name and version of the generative AI system used eg ChatGPT-4.0
- Publisher (company that made the AI system) eg OpenAI
- URL of the AI system
- Brief description (single sentence) of context in which the tool was used.

For example: *“I acknowledge the use of ChatGPT-3.5 (Open AI, <https://chat.openai.com/>) to proofread my final draft.”*

Please consult the University’s [Generative AI Guidance for Postgraduate Researchers](#) for more detailed guidance around the use of GenAI tools and the acknowledgments needed.

**If you are planning to incorporate any work you have used towards an earlier degree** in your thesis, you need special permission for this. The thesis itself must indicate the earlier work incorporated. In addition to any earlier work the thesis must include a substantial new body of research<sup>9</sup>. If you are not sure whether the relevant permissions are in place please contact your Graduate School immediately, well before you submit your thesis.

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<sup>9</sup> Please see the Regulations for Ordinance X: [Regulation 9](#)

## Abstract

An abstract (summary) of the thesis of no more than 300 words should be included immediately after the acknowledgements page.

## Table of Contents and Lists of Tables and Illustrative Material

The table of contents should immediately follow the abstract. It should list in sequence, with page numbers, all relevant subdivisions of the thesis, including the titles of chapters, sections, and subsections, as appropriate, the bibliography and any appendices. Lists of tables and illustrations should follow the table of contents and should list, with page numbers, all tables, images, diagrams, etc., in the order in which they occur in the text.

## Ethics approval

If your research required ethics approval, it is expected that a copy of the ethics approval from the relevant body (e.g. research ethics committee) will be included in the appendix.

## Abbreviations

Where abbreviations are used, a key must be provided.

## Referencing Styles

You must use an established referencing standard in your thesis (examples include Harvard, or Numeric or other recognised referencing style used within a discipline). It is important that you familiarise yourself with the referencing conventions used in your subject area and you should seek further advice from your Supervisors or Director of PGR Studies on employing the correct academic conventions for referencing and citing work within your discipline. You may find the information on the [Library website](#) helpful.

## Presentation of your name on the thesis

You must use your full, registered name on the title page of your which are held in the University's records. If you wish to change your name in the University records please see the [website](#) for further advice.

## Inclusion of Supplementary Information with your thesis

Any material that is considered essential reading for the examiner for them to reach a considered evaluation of the work should be included in the thesis. This is the examined content and is the body of work evidencing the quality and quantity of original research results, independent critical ability and matter suitable for publication that must be read and assessed by the examiners.

Supplementary content is defined as additional data and materials which it may be useful for examiners to have access to, but there is no requirement for the examiners to refer to the supplementary data/material in order to examine the work. The thesis must stand alone and be understandable without the supplementary data/material. The examiners may access the supplementary material if they wish, but may choose not to do so. You may upload supporting supplementary material/data to GRAD alongside your thesis submission for examination. Where it is necessary to include supplementary data/information you will need to complete and [upload a separate form](#) to GRAD when you submit your thesis for examination. This should be used in exceptional circumstances only, where it is considered that it may be important for examiners to have access to supporting material.

## Multi-format thesis

The expected format of submission of a thesis for examination will normally be a single PDF upload to GRAD, which should include all appendices in a single file. If your thesis is [practice-led](#) you may need to upload additional files. However from 2023/24, Graduate Board has approved a 12-month pilot to support applications for the submission of a multi-part thesis for examination from all Schools. A 'Multi-Part' Thesis is a thesis in which the examinable content<sup>10</sup> consists of multiple elements, and more than just a single PDF submission. Such additional content may include a number of different electronic files and formats (for example PDF, jpeg, mp3, mp4). Guidance on the pilot and the application form are [available on the website](#).

## Practice-led research degree submissions (AHC)

PGRs in AHC registered for a practice-led research degree must also consult the [Practice-led protocol](#). This sets out information relating to the submission and assessment of practice-led research degrees including the assessment of any live practice and the recording and format of the submission. The 'thesis' submission for examination to GRAD<sup>11</sup> will consist of a 'written submission' (in PDF format) along with a 'substantial body of creative practice, which may take the form of separate additional electronic files (e.g. PDF, jpeg, mp3). Practice-led PGRs have been included in the multi-part thesis pilot (see above) to help us better understand the range and nature of content being submitted, and to support you with the management, sharing and preservation of these materials. Please [consult the multi-part thesis guidance](#) for further advice and the forms you are asked to submit at examination entry and thesis submission.

## Use of solely or jointly authored publications within a thesis submission

Where work, which has formed part of a solely or jointly authored publication is to be included within a thesis you must declare your intention to use this work (and the contributions of each

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<sup>10</sup> Where we talk about a multi-part thesis, we are referring to 'examined content' which is content that is essential for the examiners in order to examine the work. This is different to '[supplementary content](#)'.

<sup>11</sup> If you have a very large file please consider providing a link to the file using OneDrive or SharePoint.

author in the case of jointly-authored publications) on the appropriate section of the examination entry workflow. This information will be provided to the examiners with the thesis. You must also upload a copy of each publication to GRAD alongside your thesis. Publications should not be provided alongside the final eThesis which is uploaded to WREO. Further detail is given in the [Guidelines on the Use of Solely or Jointly-Authored Publications](#).

### Alternative style of doctoral thesis including published material

This model of submission is currently only available to doctoral PGRs registered in the Faculties of Environment, Engineering and Physical Sciences (Engineering Schools only), Biological Sciences, Medicine and Health and Arts, Humanities and Cultures. Doctoral PGRs in these Faculties who wish to consider this route to submission must first discuss this with their Supervisory team. This model of thesis can only be submitted where the supervisory team supports this format of submission and is satisfied it is appropriate and meets the protocol in place for that Faculty. For further information, please consult the relevant [Faculty protocol](#).

Your [Faculty's protocol](#) will give more detail about the format, content and presentation of an alternative format thesis, and you should read and follow the guidance given by your Faculty. In addition to the format and content presentation given in your Faculty's protocol, any thesis submitted for examination, including those which use published material must include the following: a title page, intellectual property and publications, acknowledgements page, abstract, contents, list of abbreviations, references/bibliography and any appendices.

### Dual Award PhDs

If you are registered on a Dual Award PhD, there may be particular expectations for your thesis and/or viva, depending on your programme of study. Please consult our [Dual Award Guidance](#), which includes further information for each of the Dual Awards and which sets out any additional examination information you will need to be aware of.

### Length of Thesis

During the examination of your thesis your examiners will be considering both the quality and value of your work and the way in which you have chosen to present your review, results, arguments, and conclusions. Your ability to express your findings in a clear and concise manner will be under examination and excessive length or too discursive a style may be considered a weakness. The University expects that theses will normally not exceed the following maximum lengths<sup>12</sup>:

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<sup>12</sup>The page limits given here are an approximation based on you having presented your thesis (text size, spacing) in accordance with these regulations. If your thesis is longer than the page limit but still within the word limit the Graduate School should send confirmation (including the word count) to [rp\\_examinations@adm.leeds.ac.uk](mailto:rp_examinations@adm.leeds.ac.uk)

MA, MSc, MSc (Eng) and MEd	30,000 words (100 pages)
MPhil	60,000 words (200 pages)
PhD (including Integrated PhD & Master)	100,000 words (300 pages)
EdD	55,000 words (185 pages)
DPaedDent	50,000 words (170 pages)
DHSC	50,000 words (170 pages)
MD	80,000 words (250 pages)
DClinPsychol	40,000 words (135 pages) <sup>13</sup>
Practice-led PhD	A minimum word limit of 15,000 and a maximum word limit of 50,000
Practice-led MPhil	A minimum word limit of 10,000 and a maximum word limit of 30,000
Alternative format thesis with published material	See <a href="#">guidance above</a>

**Please note that the above limits include all appendices & footnotes but not bibliographies/reference lists.** Appendices are regarded as examinable content which the examiners need to read. They are therefore included in the overall word/page limit of the thesis. If you have any material that is useful for the examiners to have access to, but not is essential to the examination of the thesis, it may be appropriate for this to instead be submitted and shared as supplementary material separate from the thesis itself. Please see the [earlier guidance](#).

A thesis submitted under the alternative style route is not expected to exceed the normal page/word limits for the degree..

It should be noted that the maximum limits are not intended to be interpreted as a requirement for the length of the thesis and that in certain disciplines the thesis may be considerably shorter. Your supervisor is best placed to advise you on the desirable length and form of your submission within the University's limits and you should seek further advice from your Supervisors or Director of PGR Studies.

### [Extensions to the maximum length of theses](#)

It is accepted that in some disciplines it may be necessary to exceed the stipulated limit in individual cases. If you believe you cannot avoid exceeding the above maximum length, or the maximum length specified by your School, you should talk to your Supervisor and then, if necessary, the Director of PGR Studies will seek approval from the Graduate Board for submission of a thesis which exceeds the stated limits. However, it remains open to the examiners to reach an academic judgement on the thesis as a whole and whether the additional length is justified or should be reduced as part of any corrections to the thesis. It is therefore in your own interests to consider the question of overall length during the initial stages of thesis preparation.

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<sup>13</sup>**DClinPsychol only:** In exceptional cases, with the approval of their supervisor(s), PGRs may include appendices (up to 20,000 words maximum) which will not be counted towards the overall word length of the thesis.



## 5. Submitting your thesis for examination

### Deadline for Submission

You should aim to submit your thesis within the standard period of study for the research degree programme upon which you are registered. However, you must submit your thesis for examination by the maximum time limit for your programme. Your standard period of study and maximum time limit dates are visible on your GRAD record. It is important that you submit your thesis for examination on or before your maximum time limit for submission. If you do not submit your thesis by this deadline it may lead to you being required to withdraw from your studies.

If difficulties arise you must talk to your Graduate School as soon as possible for advice, otherwise you may compromise your ability to complete your research degree successfully. Please see the [website for advice on suspensions and extensions](#) which also includes information about the support services available across the University.

You may upload your thesis to GRAD at any time in the day up to 23:59pm on or before your thesis submission deadline, but please bear in mind that it is likely that Graduate School and Doctoral College staff will only be available to support and assist you during normal office hours. If other difficulties arise you must talk to your Graduate School as soon as possible for advice.

Where the maximum time limit for submission falls on a day when the University is closed as a consequence of either a holiday period (for instance a Bank Holiday) or a weekend, the deadline for upload of the thesis to GRAD will be no later than 23:59pm the next working day.

In some cases, you may be able to submit your thesis early, before the end of your standard period of study. Early submission of the thesis can only be made where it is supported by your supervisor(s) and your DoPGRS where: (a) the thesis is complete and ready for submission and (b) has been read by your supervisor in its entirety. There are limits to the length of the reduction that can be approved. Please see the [website](#) for further information.

### Format of submission

The expected format of submission of a thesis for examination will normally be a single PDF upload to GRAD. All appendices should be included in the single file. However Graduate Board has approved a pilot to support applications for the submission of a multi-part thesis. [Please see the earlier section of this Guide](#) for further details. If your thesis is practice-led, you may need to upload additional files. Please see the [practice-led section](#) for advice.

Printed submission can be facilitated, by exception, where there is an academic need (for example a practice-led thesis where the binding/presentation is integral to the examination). Please contact Doctoral College Operations well before you reach the thesis submission point if you feel a printed submission may be needed, so options can be explored.

## Process for submission

From the main GRAD front page select “My project”. On the right-hand side of your project page select “Thesis examination”. This opens two workflows:

- (a) Examination Entry (See [earlier in this document](#) for advice)
- (b) Thesis Submission:
  - Select the Thesis Submission Workflow
  - Select Submit Thesis
  - Upload your thesis, and any publications and/or Covid-19 impact statement<sup>14</sup>. Save
  - Confirm the thesis submission and academic integrity statements. Save and continue
  - Confirm you want to submit your thesis.
  - The process is now complete – you will receive a confirmation email.

**Please check your thesis carefully before your upload it.** You are solely responsible for the decision to submit your work for examination and for the thesis which is submitted. You must check your thesis thoroughly before submission. Once you have submitted your thesis you cannot then subsequently change or amend it, even if you spot issues with the presentation. If you do spot anything after you have submitted your thesis, remember that examiners can award research degrees with corrections, and any issues can be corrected as part of that work after the viva. It is very normal for the examiners to ask for some typographical or other errors to be corrected in a thesis after the viva. Substitute versions of theses, additional pages or supplementary material cannot normally be accepted after submission of the thesis and these must not be sent directly to the examiners. This applies in all cases, irrespective of whether the thesis was submitted for examination on or before the maximum time limit for submission.

## Dispatch of your thesis to your Examiners

Your thesis will be made available to your Examiners normally within 10 working days of submission (if your examination entry arrangements have been approved). You can track the progress of your thesis submission in GRAD via the status box on the thesis examination tab in GRAD. An email will be sent from GRAD to your University email to confirm that your thesis has been sent out and will include advice about the next stages. If DCO has only recently received your examination entry (or this has not yet been submitted to DCO) there will be a delay in sending your thesis for examination.

## Between submission and viva

There are a number of things to consider once you have submitted your thesis and are waiting for your viva to take place. Further information is available [on our website](#), including advice on registration status, continued IT access, council tax and other useful information. Email notifications will be sent from GRAD at various stages in the process. These will be sent to your University IT email account only. **You must** check this account regularly.

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<sup>14</sup> If you are submitting a [multi-part thesis](#), please also upload a Multi-part thesis index form

## 6. The Oral Examination

### The oral examination

All PGRs are required to complete an oral examination also known as a viva. The oral examination is an important part of the examination process. The most productive way to approach the viva is to regard it as an academic discussion about your work – this is your chance to discuss what you have been working on with two or three other academics from outside your supervision team. It is also an opportunity to discuss your work with experts in the field - including plans for publication and further development. At the same time, the viva is a formal University examination so there are some formal requirements and it is important that you are aware of what the University's expectations are for a viva examination. Information is provided in the section below. Information on examination expectations and academic integrity can be [found in Annex 2](#).

### What to expect

The purpose of the oral examination is to ensure that the work submitted for examination reaches the University standards for the degree, that you have written the work submitted and that you understand the work you have submitted.

**The examination must be conducted in English**<sup>15</sup>. The University does not have specific regulations regarding the length of the oral examination or what should be discussed except that the thesis should be discussed with you<sup>16</sup>. Some Examiners will also wish to satisfy themselves of your general level of understanding of the subject area. The oral examination also gives you the opportunity to answer questions in areas where the Examiners are not satisfied; e.g. for a Doctoral degrees evidence of originality and independent critical ability is required and, where the evidence in the thesis is not compelling, the Examiners may use the oral examination to encourage you to provide convincing evidence that the stated criteria can be met. Additional tests may also be set by the Examiners. One purpose of these tests might be to establish that the thesis is your own work. This could include a short presentation to the examiners at the start of the oral examination.

### Preparing for your oral examination

You should consult your supervisor(s) for appropriate guidance in preparation for your oral examination. A “mock viva” may be helpful for some PGRs, and if so, you should again consult your supervisors. [Section 3 of this document](#) outlines a number of sources of advice in

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<sup>15</sup>With the exception of research degrees in the modern languages, where, in certain circumstances the viva might, with the agreement of the examiners, be conducted in a language other than English

<sup>16</sup>The University does provide all examiners with good practice advice on the conduct of the oral examination and you may find it helpful to consult this [advice](#) when preparing for your viva.

preparation for your oral examination, including the [training opportunities](#) for postgraduate researchers available. The process for identifying and agreeing support and reasonable adjustments for the final oral examination is [set out earlier this document](#).

## Arrangements for your oral examination

Once the examiners have received your thesis, they are asked to accept a timescale of 3 months in which to complete the oral examination. Detailed arrangements for the oral examination, are made by the Internal Examiner. DCO does not make these arrangements. The Examiners are expected to take account of known religious observances when arranging the oral examination.

## Format for the oral examination

There are three possible models for a viva:

- Fully in person (all parties together on campus for a face-to-face viva)
- Fully remote (all parties complete the viva via Microsoft Teams or Zoom)
- Hybrid (some parties are face to face whilst others in the meeting are video streaming). This could include you and your internal examiner being co-located on Campus with the external examiner joining via a link or the examiners being co-located, with you joining via video-streaming (and supervisor if attending and/or Independent Chair if appointed).

The [video-streamed viva policy](#) gives further advice on agreeing the format of the viva. The internal examiner is responsible for making the arrangements for the oral examination and must contact the external examiner, the PGR and the Independent Chair (if appointed) to arrange a date, time and venue (or online platform) for the examination.

**The recording of the viva by any party is not permitted.**

## Timescales for the examination

The examination process can take some time. You should plan for a period of around 6 months from the date of submission. Your thesis will be sent to your Examiners normally within 10 working days of submission, providing that your thesis meets the University's requirements and your examination entry workflow has been approved by the Progression and Examinations Group<sup>17</sup>. Once the examiners have received your thesis, they are asked to accept a timescale of 3 months in which to complete the oral examination. If you are successful in the examination, there could be a further period after this when you will be required to undertake minor corrections to the thesis (up to 12 weeks).

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<sup>17</sup>If DCO has only recently received your exam entry form (or your form has not yet been received) there will be a delay in sending your thesis out which may delay arrangements for your viva.

## Attendance for the oral examination

The University requires all PGRs to complete an oral examination. No award of a research degree can be considered unless the oral examination is completed.

It is expected that you will present for the oral examination which will normally be scheduled within 3 months of dispatch of the thesis to the Examiners (6 months in the case of MD candidates). If circumstances arise which prevent you from attending your oral examination, you must provide a valid reason supported by documentary evidence<sup>18</sup>. Cases will be considered by the Graduate Board's Progression and Examinations Group. If you are able to provide a substantiated valid reason for your unavailability/absence permission may be given to delay, postpone or reschedule an oral examination. However, if you are unable to provide a substantiated valid reason, this may result in you being withdrawn from the University with no further opportunity to complete the oral examination.

No PGR will normally be granted a period of postponement to the oral examination of more than 12 months from the date the thesis is sent out to the examiners (15 months in the case of MD).

## Who can attend the viva

Your thesis examination will be attended by you, your external examiner(s) and an internal examiner(s). In some cases an independent chair may be appointed ([see below](#)). Optionally, you may invite one of your supervisors to attend as an observer ([see below](#)). If you have more than one supervisor only one can be invited to attend your viva. It may have been agreed, as a reasonable adjustment, that the presence of a supporter, support worker, note taker or specialist mentor is allowed. Please contact your Graduate School if you need to discuss any reasonable adjustments for your viva. Your Graduate School will let the examiners know of this arrangement before the viva. No other parties are permitted to attend the viva. Please [see Annex 2 of Guide](#) for information on examination expectations and attendees at a viva.

## Attendance of your Supervisor at the viva

You may invite one of your supervisors to attend the oral examination as an observer. Your supervisor may only attend with your prior permission and must respect your wishes on this matter. If attending as an observer, your supervisor may not participate in the examination and takes no part in the academic judgement and the decision-making process. They must leave after the examination (along with you) so the examiners can discuss their recommendation. If you have more than one supervisor, only one supervisor is permitted to attend the examination. If they are not going to be present as an observer, the supervisor (or appropriate individual e.g. Director of PGR Studies or Advisor) is required to be available for contact if necessary (contactable by telephone is acceptable).

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<sup>18</sup> For example a medical note in the case of illness.

## Attendance of an independent chair

In some circumstances an independent chair may be appointed. The role of the independent chair is to ensure that the examination is conducted in accordance with University regulations. The independent chair is not expected to be an expert in the subject area, although they should be from a cognate discipline and is not expected to read the thesis or play a role in academic examination or question the candidate on the work being examined at the oral examination.

## What to bring to your viva

You should have a copy of your thesis with you. This may be an electronic version open on the computer or a printed copy. Please refer to your copy of the thesis when needed, for example if it's helpful when discussing equations, diagrams etc. We encourage you to re-read your thesis in preparation for your viva. If you want to add notes you can do so. You may want to mark errors, add thoughts or use it as a quick way to find particular sections on the day. Many PGRs use post-it notes or similar to help with this, but any form of annotation is acceptable.

In general, it is acceptable for you to bring with you to your viva material that you created during your studies. Other third-party material (this means any material not created by you during your studies) is not permitted in the viva. This includes materials in printed or physical form as well as those in electronic format.

Please [see Annex 2 of this Guide](#) for information on examination expectations and material permitted at a viva.

## 'Mitigating circumstances' for PGRs

For postgraduate researchers, the Graduate Board accommodates 'mitigating circumstances' by considering a period of suspension or extension of study which will lengthen the overall candidature and delay the deadline for submission of the thesis for examination. To be eligible for the award of the degree, all PGRs must complete an oral examination and the thesis submitted for examination must meet the stated criteria for award of the degree and the specified learning outcomes must be met. Any mitigating circumstances which may have affected the PGR during their period of study should not be taken into account as part of the assessment of the thesis and should never lead the examiners to award a research degree where the work is not felt to be of the appropriate standard. However such factors might be taken into account when determining whether any reasonable adjustments to the examination process should be considered, for example in the case of a disability, or in terms of what support may be needed in order to complete any amendments to the thesis after the examination.

## 7. The result of the examination

### The outcome of the examination

The result of the examination should be given informally to you after the viva<sup>19</sup>.

You will be given one of the following recommendations based on the assessment of the written thesis and the performance in the viva:

- a) that the degree be awarded (without corrections)
- b) that the degree be awarded subject to editorial and presentational corrections
- c) that the degree be awarded subject to the correction of minor deficiencies
- d) that the thesis be referred for resubmission
- e) that no research degree be awarded

In the case of PhD submissions, the following recommendations are also available:

- a) that the degree of MPhil be awarded (without corrections)
- b) that the degree of MPhil be awarded subject to editorial & presentational corrections
- c) that the degree of MPhil be awarded subject to the correction of minor deficiencies
- d) that the thesis be referred for resubmission for the degree of MPhil

Mastership by Research and MPhil degrees may be awarded with distinction; this is not possible with other research degrees. However, where examiners identify doctoral candidates who have submitted an excellent thesis a recommendation can be made by the examiners for a letter recognising this outstanding achievement from the Dean of the Leeds Doctoral College.

The next steps in the process will depend on the recommendation of your examiners, and are set out in the sections below.

We understand that in some cases you may be disappointed by the outcome of your examination, and that you may have further questions. There are a number of sources of support and information that will be available to you. Please see the [post-viva support section](#).

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<sup>19</sup> This must be within 24 hours of completion of the oral examination

## Award (without corrections)

An award without corrections means that you have met the learning outcomes, and the thesis satisfies the requirements for award and does not require any alterations. You must now upload a copy of your eThesis to White Rose Etheses Online within 1 month of your viva ([see later section](#)). You can find advice on how to upload your eThesis on the [Library website](#).

## Award subject to editorial and presentational corrections

An award subject to editorial and presentational corrections means that you have met the learning outcomes for the programme, and the thesis satisfies the requirements for the award of the degree but is found to contain minor editorial errors (e.g. trivial errors, typographical errors, simple mistakes of fact or the insertion of headings or other 'signpost' material for the sake of clarity). Your examiners will advise you of the corrections that are needed to your thesis and you should begin work on these immediately. You will not receive these details from DCO. Your corrections must be completed and returned to your Internal Examiner, normally within 4 weeks from the oral examination. When your internal examiner has approved your corrections, you must then upload a copy of your eThesis within 1 month of your internal examiner approving your corrections. Please see the [later sections of this Guide](#) for further advice.

## Award subject to minor deficiencies

An award subject to minor deficiencies means that you have met the learning outcomes for the programme, and the thesis satisfies the requirements for the award of the degree but is found to contain deficiencies which are genuinely minor in nature (e.g. rewriting of sections, correcting calculations or clarifying arguments and the correction of minor typographical errors).

Your internal examiner will advise you in writing (normally within 1 working day of the viva) of the corrections that are needed to your thesis and you should begin work on these immediately. You will not receive these details from DCO. Your corrections must be completed and returned to your Internal Examiner, normally within 12 weeks from the viva. Please [see the later section](#) of this Guide. When your internal examiner has approved your corrections, you must then upload a copy of your eThesis within 1 month of your internal examiner approving your corrections ([see later section](#)). You can find advice on how to upload your eThesis on the [Library website](#).

## Referral for resubmission

The decision to "refer" a thesis is normally interpreted as signifying that, although the thesis is potentially of a standard to merit the award of the degree concerned it does not, at this stage, satisfy the requirements for award and certain sections and/or aspects of the thesis are in need of alteration and improvement and a re-examination of the work will be required. A thesis may also be referred in circumstances where the PGR does not completely satisfy the examiners



through their performance at the oral examination that the award of the degree is justified at this stage.

You will be required to revise your thesis, which may entail further research, or any other activity required by the examiners, and resubmit this for re-examination. The examiners will prepare “Notes for Guidance” which will set out what needs to be done for the thesis to reach the standards required for award of the degree. [Further information is available on the website.](#)

The examiners’ report and notes for guidance must be submitted to DCO for scrutiny by Examinations Group. For referred PGRs, the report and notes for guidance do not have to wait for a full meeting of the Group and are considered on a continuous basis between meetings. DCO aim to send you your report and notes for guidance within a period of 6 weeks of receipt of the report and notes for guidance but if for any reason it will not be possible to meet this timescale you will be kept informed. The examiners’ report and their notes for guidance will be issued to you by DCO after approval by the Progression and Examinations Group with details of how to resubmit for re-examination. Graduate Schools are not permitted to issue informal notes for guidance and any advice given at the time of the viva or immediately after, is informal.

You may appeal against a decision to refer the thesis. Please see the [Advice and support after your viva section](#) for further information.

#### MPhil award on a PhD submission

This recommendation applies to those PhDs which do not achieve the standard for the award of a PhD but which nevertheless satisfy the criteria for the award of the degree of MPhil. The examiners’ report will provide reasons why this decision has been reached and this will be sent to you by DCO after approval by the Progression and Examinations Group. You may also request a copy of the examiners’ preliminary reports. Your internal examiner will advise you of any corrections that are needed to your thesis before MPhil award.

PGRs may appeal against a decision to award MPhil on a PhD submission. The procedure can be found on the [website](#). If you are considering an appeal, we would strongly encourage you to seek independent advice and support from the Student Advice Centre of the Leeds University Union where experienced staff are available to provide guidance. There are also a number of other support services available to you – please see the [website](#). PGRs on a Student Visa are also advised to take advice from the [Student Visa Advice Team](#). Please see the [Advice and support after your viva section](#) for further information.

#### No research degree award (Fail)

If the examiners recommend that the thesis be failed there is no further opportunity to revise and submit the work. In their report the examiners must clearly explain their reasons for not recommending the award of a degree and this will be sent to you by DCO after approval by the

Progression and Examinations Group. You may also request a copy of the examiners' preliminary reports.

PGRs may appeal against a decision not to award a research degree. The procedure can be found on the [website](#). If you are considering an appeal, we would strongly encourage you to seek independent advice and support from the Student Advice Centre of the Leeds University Union where experienced staff are available to provide guidance. There are also a number of other support services available to you - please see the [website](#). PGRs on a Student Visa are also advised to take advice from the [Student Visa Advice Team](#). Please see the [Advice and support after your viva section](#) for further information.

### Advice and support after your viva

We understand that in some cases you may be disappointed by the outcome of your examination, and that you may have a number of questions. There are a number of sources of support and information that will be available to you, both immediately after the viva, and in the days and weeks that follow.

- We would strongly encourage you to talk to your supervisor(s), Director of PGR Studies or Graduate School who will be happy to meet with you to discuss the next steps in the process and can signpost you to sources of support and information.
- For information about Student Support and Wellbeing Services please see the [Website](#). This includes support you may be receiving from the Disability Support Services, and other support that is available to you from the [University Student Counselling and Wellbeing Service](#). You also have access to wellbeing resources and self-help available online.
- If you are considering an appeal we would strongly encourage you to seek independent advice and support from the [Leeds University Union Student Advice Centre](#)  
Email: [advice@luu.leeds.ac.uk](mailto:advice@luu.leeds.ac.uk).
- If you are an studying in the UK on a Tier 4/Student visa we also recommend that you contact the [Student Visa Advice Team](#). Email: [studentvisaadvice@leeds.ac.uk](mailto:studentvisaadvice@leeds.ac.uk)
- Once the examination has completed you should not contact your examiners further, even if you have questions about the outcome of your examination. If you have questions we would strongly encourage you to talk to your supervisor, Director of PGR Studies or Graduate School. Independent advice and support is available from LUU.

There are a number of steps in the process before you receive the formal outcome of your examination from the University.

- Your examiners will normally have informally told you the outcome of your examination, and will probably also have given you some informal (verbal) feedback on why they have reached this decision.
- After the examination, your examiners must submit a report to the University which explains the outcome and reasons for their decision. This report must be reviewed by

your Director of PGR Studies who will then submit the report to Doctoral College Operations (DCO) Progression and Examination Team.

- DCO will write to you to confirm they have received your examiners' report, and this will include further information about the next steps on the process and the expected timescales. DCO will arrange for your report to be reviewed by the University's Progression and Examinations Group.
- In some cases the Group may request additional information or clarification of the report from the Examiners. DCO will aim to write to you to confirm the outcome, with access to the report, by no later than 4 weeks from the date the Group reviews the report. If for any reason it will not be possible to meet this timescale DCO will write to you to keep you informed.
- DCO will contact you again after the Progression and Examinations Group has considered your examiners' report. The examiners' report will be uploaded to your GRAD record, and DCO will write to you to formally confirm the outcome of your examination and will advise you where you can access your report.
- At this stage the appeal process will be open to you, if you wish to take this route. Further information will be included in the formal outcome notification from DCO.

Postgraduate Researchers may appeal against an adverse academic decision using the University's appeals procedure. The procedure can be found on the [Student Cases website](#).

- You must submit your appeal to the University within 20 working days of the date of the formal outcome notification from DCO – after the Progression and Examinations Group has approved your Examiners' report.
- If you are considering an appeal against this outcome, we would strongly encourage you to seek independent advice and support from the LUU Student Advice Centre. Email: [advice@luu.leeds.ac.uk](mailto:advice@luu.leeds.ac.uk). Further information is available on the [Website](#). If you are submitting an appeal, the right team to support you is Leeds University Union Student Advice Team. They will offer you independent support and advice throughout the process and we ask that you get in touch with them directly.
- Unfortunately, your Graduate School team cannot answer any questions that you have relating to your appeal, including its progress, however they are still here to help support you with other matters related to your research candidature. If they can be of assistance, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

### Graduate Board's Progression and Examinations Group

After the viva the examiners must produce a joint report which outlines their recommendation. The recommendation of the examiners is subject to confirmation by the Graduate Board's Progression and Examinations Group (which meets 8 times each year). In some cases, the Group may request further information from your examiners before giving final approval to the report.

## 8. Completing corrections (after successful examination)

### Correcting any presentational and editorial corrections or minor deficiencies

Recommendations for award subject to editorial and presentational corrections or minor deficiencies cannot be confirmed unless the internal examiner is satisfied that the required corrections have been carried out to a satisfactory standard such that the criteria for award have been met.

After successful examination you should begin to prepare the final version of your thesis by undertaking any corrections and returning these to your Internal Examiner within the normal time period (4 weeks for editorial & presentational corrections & 12 weeks for minor deficiencies). Individual pages of the thesis must be fully corrected, and it is not possible to simply provide an errata page. You must also ensure that the thesis abstract remains appropriate.

You are advised to consult with your Supervisor(s) throughout this process. **The Internal Examiner does not take a supervisory role during the correction period.** They may, however, provide clarification of the corrections required. If you are unclear about any of the minor deficiencies requiring correction you must seek clarification promptly, and at an early point in the correction period. You should consult with your supervisor in the first instance and, if appropriate, your supervisor may contact the Internal Examiner for further clarification<sup>20</sup>.

### Approval of your corrections by the Internal Examiner

Once the corrections have been completed you must submit these to your internal examiner for checking. The external examiner can be consulted on the corrections if they wish. To assist in the process of checking and approving the corrections it is expected that you will provide your internal examiner with information outlining what corrections you have made, along with your corrected thesis. This could be in the form of tracked changes or supplied as a separate list. You should check with your internal examiner what format they would prefer.

Once your internal examiner has approved the corrections they should notify DCO by email to [rp\\_examinations@adm.leeds.ac.uk](mailto:rp_examinations@adm.leeds.ac.uk). At this point you can prepare your final eThesis and upload this to White Rose Etheses Online. You do not need to wait for formal communication from DCO and can arrange for eThesis upload as soon as you have approval from your internal examiner.

### Extensions to the correction periods

If you experience any problems completing and returning the corrections to your internal examiner by the 4/12-week deadline, please talk to your Graduate School. The University does

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<sup>20</sup>PGRs working on corrections may still have contact with their supervisor and must continue to attend to the satisfaction of their School

not prescribe whether a PGR is expected to work full-time on their corrections, or a number of hours per day, as it is acknowledged that at this point in their candidature many PGRs will already have taken up other responsibilities and commitments. The Progression and Examinations Group will consider a short extension to the correction deadline if PGRs experience difficulties during the correction period and need extra time because of, for example, illness, work, or family commitments.

#### Failure to complete corrections to the satisfaction of the internal examiner

Recommendations for award subject to editorial and presentational corrections or minor deficiencies cannot be confirmed unless the internal examiner is satisfied that the required corrections have been carried out to a satisfactory standard such that all the criteria for award have been met. If the corrections are not completed satisfactorily it will be deemed that the PGR has not complied with the requirements for award.

If after checking the corrections, the internal examiner is of the view that not all of the required corrections have been carried out to a satisfactory standard, exceptional permission will be required from the Progression and Examinations Group to allow for a further correction period to address any outstanding corrections and allow for the conditions for award to be fully met. A case must be made by the Director of PGR Studies for consideration by the Progression and Examinations Group. Normally only one additional correction period and attempt at the corrections will be permitted. The period allowed will not normally exceed one-month. If after this period the internal examiner is still not satisfied with the corrections carried out to the thesis it will be deemed that the PGR has not complied with the requirements for award and the candidature will come to an end with no research degree awarded. All cases must be considered by the Progression and Examinations Group.

## 9. Submission of the final eThesis (after examination)

### Final eThesis submission requirements

You must submit your final, corrected thesis for retention in the University Library. You will need to upload your final, corrected thesis to [White Rose eTheses Online](#) (WREO). You can find a step-by-step walk through of the deposit process on the [Library website](#). You will need to create an account and register<sup>21</sup>, after which you can enter details about your thesis, including whether an embargo is needed, and upload your eThesis.

### When to upload your eThesis

You should only upload the final, corrected version of your eThesis normally within one month of your internal examiner approving any corrections to your thesis. If there were no corrections required, the deadline for deposit is normally within one month of the viva.

### What file format to upload as your eThesis

One complete PDF eThesis file MUST be supplied in all cases. Information on the file presentation and filename is included in the step-by-step walk through of the deposit process on the [Library website](#). A PDF must be supplied in all cases, to fulfil the requirements for the award of your degree and is the version that will be made live and accessible in WREO after any embargo period. **To help ensure longer-term digital preservation of your thesis it is strongly recommended that you also provide your thesis in its original source file format (e.g. Word, LaTeX) in addition to the PDF.**

### Thesis embargo arrangements

Wherever possible theses should be made 'open access', however in some cases immediate access to a thesis may not be possible and you might need to add a temporary embargo. Access to the full thesis can normally be restricted for one, two, three, or five years where:

- The thesis includes confidential or politically sensitive information.
- The thesis includes commercially sensitive information.
- There is a journal article, monograph or other publication from the thesis pending.

In the case of a patent pending or in other exceptional circumstances it may be possible to embargo your thesis for longer. If you think this might be necessary, you should consult with

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<sup>21</sup> Please use your full legal name as held in the University's registration records, including forename and all middle names. If the name you enter does not correspond with that which appears in University records (and on the pass list) it may need to be amended in the WREO/Library records to correspond with the pass list.

your Supervisor. A case must be made to DCO, and a form is available from DCO for these purposes. All requests will be considered by the Progression and Examinations Group.

In exceptional cases, it may be necessary to hide all details about a thesis from public view, including your name, thesis title and abstract. If you think this might be necessary, you should consult with your Supervisor before you upload your eThesis so that the matter can be raised with your Director of PGR Studies. A case must be made by your Director of PGR Studies to be considered by the Progression and Examinations Group, and a form is available from DCO for these purposes.

Decisions on whether an embargo is required and how long is appropriate should be taken in consultation with your supervisor(s). Therefore, before you upload your eThesis you should discuss the retention of thesis arrangements with your supervisor(s) so you can agree whether to embargo your thesis from immediate publication. This could be particularly important if your research has been carried out as part of a research group and you must therefore discuss these matters with your supervisor(s) before you upload your thesis. Some commercial sponsors may also require that restrictions be placed upon access to the thesis. Publisher policies do vary, and in the case of a publication pending you should check directly whether an embargo is necessary and agree arrangements with your Supervisor.

If you were UKRI funded, please refer to their Terms and Conditions for advice on embargo periods. In accordance with the terms and conditions for funding, the full text version of the thesis should be available within a maximum of 12 months following award. UKRI recognise that commercial, collaborative or publication arrangements may necessitate a slight delay, however expect the thesis to be available as soon as possible. Please see the [Terms and conditions for training funding – UKRI](#) for further advice. A case for embargo periods exceeding 12 months for UKRI funded PGRs should be forwarded by the Supervisor to the DoPGRS before being sent to Doctoral College Operations team for further consideration. All requests will be considered by the Progression and Examinations Group. Consultation with the Scholarships Manager may be required.

As part of the eThesis upload process you will be asked to specify any embargo that has been agreed with your supervisor. Email confirmation will be sent to you, your Supervisor and DCO. Your Supervisor is asked to inform DCO if any change is required to the embargo period you selected and may recommend the embargo period to be increased or reduced. Please ensure that you add the names of your supervisor(s) and their email address(es) so that they receive a copy of the email confirming the upload of the eThesis and the embargo information selected.

It is your responsibility to contact the Library before the end of the embargo period if you wish to change the period of embargo (either to lift this early or to extend the period). You should contact your Supervisor to discuss and agree any change to the embargo period. If agreed, you can then contact the Library to ask for the change to be made. As part of the eThesis

upload process you will also be asked to indicate a Creative Commons Licence for your work. Please consult the [Library website](#) for further advice.

## Export Licence

UK Export Controls restrict the transfer or disclosure of sensitive goods, software, and technology (know-how and other information) to recipients and destinations outside of the UK. This includes physical exports, electronic transfers (via email, file sharing, virtual meetings, etc.), and transfers by any other means (verbal communication). This only applies if the information is not already in the public domain. If your thesis has been deposited in WREO and is publicly available without an embargo, no further action should be needed. Export control legislation may apply where:

- Your research is in any of the subject areas designated as [High Risk or as one of the Dual-Use categories](#); and
- Your thesis has been deposited in WREO with an embargo (or if any part of the thesis was redacted); and
- You will be leaving the UK at the end of your studies and will be taking a copy of your full thesis with you (whether physical or transferred electronically).

Please discuss with your Supervisors whether you may need export control licence. Your supervisors can contact the Trusted Research Environment Manager for assistance and advice

## Deposit of research data and associated materials

PGRs and Supervisors should also consider and agree what other research data/materials generated during the candidature should be kept, and the arrangements for deposit of such material. This will normally be covered by your data management plan. You should agree arrangements with your Supervisor before you leave the University. Information on research data management is available on the [Research Data Leeds website](#). Advice and support are available from the Library's Research Data team. Contact them **well before** you submit your thesis: [researchdataenquiries@leeds.ac.uk](mailto:researchdataenquiries@leeds.ac.uk). Please also [see the Doctoral College Website](#).

## Confirmation of eThesis upload and eThesis availability

Once the upload process has been completed you will receive confirmation via email. This will also be sent to your supervisor and DCO. The uploaded file will not go live until after your degree has been awarded and your name has appeared on a pass list. However, if you have placed an embargo on access to your thesis then the eThesis will not go live until after the embargo has expired. If an embargo is placed on the thesis, certain data will still be visible in the University Library catalogue and in WREO, including your name, thesis title and the abstract of your thesis. However, the full text of your thesis will not be accessible until after the expiry of the embargo period. If you wish to restrict access to the full abstract during the embargo period, you



may also provide a revised abstract to be made available during this period. After the embargo period the eThesis will automatically be released and will be available for access.

#### Preparing a redacted eThesis (if required)

Please consult the [Library website](#) for advice on using copyrighted material in your thesis and publishing material from your thesis. You can also contact [copyright@leeds.ac.uk](mailto:copyright@leeds.ac.uk). You are expected to make all reasonable efforts to seek permission to include third party copyright material in the electronic version of your thesis. If you have not been able to obtain the permission of the copyright holder<sup>22</sup>, you will need to prepare two versions of your eThesis as follows:

- *eThesis 1*: A “complete eThesis” - a single file including the final, corrected content of your thesis (as approved by your examiners).
- *eThesis 2*: If *supported* by your School, a “redacted eThesis” with any third party copyright material redacted (removed or obscured) and replaced with a statement such as *"This image has been removed by the author of this thesis for copyright reasons"*. If possible, when removing material, a placeholder should be included to retain the pagination of the original document. A complete eThesis file **MUST** still be supplied but will not be made available online. After the end of any embargo period placed on the thesis only the redacted eThesis will be made available for access.

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<sup>22</sup> E.g. where no response is received or because it would be too expensive

## 10. Award of your degree and graduation

### Award of a research degree

Your research degree can be awarded, and your name included on a pass list once **all** the following conditions have been met:

- Your examiners' report has been approved by the [Progression and Examinations Group](#).
- DCO has received confirmation that the internal examiner is satisfied with any corrections
- You have deposited the full text version of your eThesis in WREO<sup>23</sup>
- All tuition fees to the University have been paid.
- If applicable, all assessed or taught modules have been completed successfully.

In accordance with the decision of the Graduate Board no exceptions will be permitted and staff in DCO have no discretion in these matters.

### Pass List

Pass Lists are normally produced weekly. You will receive an email (to your University email) confirming your degree has been awarded. After the date of the Progression and Examinations Group meeting you can track progress towards award in GRAD via the 'award checklist' which will be updated to confirm the pass list has been produced and your research degree awarded.

### Certificate

Information about how you will receive your degree certificate and timescales is available on the [website](#). The University provides one original copy of the degree certificate. A Diploma Supplement is also issued. The date of award which appears on the final degree certificate and the Diploma Supplement is the date of the Graduate Board's Examinations Group meeting at which your examiners' report was considered and approved.

### Graduation

Further information about graduation can be found on the Graduation pages of the [website](#).

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<sup>23</sup> If you are a practice-led researcher your eThesis will comprise both the written commentary and the related practice material, and all elements must be deposited before the award of the degree can be confirmed

## Award statements

If you require evidence of your award you can request a statement. Statements are provided free of charge for the first 3 months after your name has appeared on a pass list. Requests can be made to the thesis examination section ([rp\\_examinations@adm.leeds.ac.uk](mailto:rp_examinations@adm.leeds.ac.uk)). After 3 months, statements should be ordered through the University's [Online Store](#) and there is a small charge.

## After award

Your Graduate School will be able to give you further advice about any Faculty/School leavers' protocol which you may need to follow. The [Website](#) includes a helpful checklist of things to think about before leaving the University, including facilities and admin (Keys, Fobs, Desk space etc) and IT access, this can be found in the 'Beyond the Viva' section.

Further information on your IT Account can be found on the [IT Website here](#).

If you hold a Student Visa and are eligible for the Graduate Route, DCO will make the relevant report to UKVI within 10 working days of the pass list notification, and you will receive a further notification to confirm this report has been made. If you need any further information about the Graduate Route, more information [can be found on the For Students website](#). You can also contact the [Student Visa Advice Team](#).

# Annex I: Covid-19: Assessment of Learning Outcomes and Covid-19 Impact Statement

## Covid-19 Guidance

The University has prepared the following guidance for PGRs, Supervisors and Examiners on the assessment of learning outcomes. The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) has produced advice on [Doctoral Standards for Research Students and Supervisors](#) which it may be helpful to read in conjunction with this guidance.

It is recognised that in some cases the research plans, and the thesis submission, may have to change from what was originally intended. This might include changes to the methodology, experimental design, plans for data collection, or refining the scope or the emphasis of the original research project. However, the **quality** of the thesis is expected to be equivalent to that produced at other times. The Learning Outcomes and criteria for award are unchanged. Flexibility may be considered, if appropriate, on the **quantity** of material expected in the thesis, whilst ensuring that the quality of the submission is preserved, and that the examiners still have a sufficient body of research to assess that the criteria for award and [learning outcomes](#) have been met. This may not always be easily quantifiable, but Supervisors, in consultation with Directors of PGR Studies and Heads of Graduate Schools, are encouraged to consider how best to interpret this for their disciplines. The [Regulations to Ordinance X, and the Programme of Study entries](#), set down the normal maximum length for each thesis submission, but the University does not specify a minimum length for any of its research degrees. The maximum limits are not intended to be interpreted as a requirement for the length of a thesis, and in certain disciplines this may normally be considerably shorter.

PGRs are invited to submit a [Covid-19 impact statement](#) alongside their thesis<sup>24</sup>, which describes any impact of Covid-19 on their research plans and thesis submission and what changes to the research project design/plans had to be made therefore, for example:

- a. How the Covid-19 pandemic impacted the research project.
- b. What steps were taken to mitigate against the disruption.
- c. Any decisions taken to change direction or focus, or re-design the research plans in response to Covid-19.

The impact statement will be shared with the examiners with the thesis submission. Examiners will be asked to consider this statement, and to be flexible in considering how a PGR may demonstrate they have met the learning outcomes and what constitutes such evidence. Examiners should be sympathetic to any Covid-19 related circumstances that may have

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<sup>24</sup> A discussion of this might also be included in the thesis, if appropriate and the Supervisor(s) will be best placed to advise on the most appropriate location and form for this

impacted the research or necessitated a change of direction or emphasis from that which may originally have been planned, whilst still ensuring that learning outcomes for each award have been met, based on the quality of the thesis submission and the PGR's defence in the oral examination. Examiners are invited to include comments in relation to a Covid-19 impact statement provided by the PGR in the relevant section of the joint report form. A PGR may have used the impact statement to document how their ability to work was affected during the pandemic due to academic or personal circumstances<sup>25</sup>. In some cases, adjustments to individual research projects may have been needed to enable PGRs to complete to their original timetable. Any changes needed to the scope of emphasis of the project will be described in the statement and should be considered in accordance with the guidance above. In other cases, these mitigating circumstances will have been dealt with by additional support and time (via a suspension or extension of studies) prior to submission of the thesis, to allow more time to complete the original project plans.

The University has an established position on mitigating circumstances which is [set out in this document](#). Any mitigating circumstances which may have affected the PGR during their period of study should never lead the examiners to award a research where the work is not felt to be of the appropriate standard. To be eligible for the award of the degree, all PGRs must complete an oral examination and the thesis submitted for examination must meet the stated criteria for award of the degree and the specified learning outcomes must be met. While the thesis may be shorter or contain fewer case studies than might otherwise be expected as a result of the difficulties encountered, it should still meet the criteria for award.

The focus should be on the **quality** of the thesis submission, together with the PGR's defence in the oral examination. In the case of doctoral awards, for example, the examiners will be expected to reach an academic judgement on whether there is a sufficient quality – and quantity – of original research, with the appropriate rigour of analysis and independent critical ability and matter suitable for publication to have met the learning outcomes for award. In considering 'matter suitable for publication' at doctoral level, the expectation is that the thesis will contain original work which is of publishable quality in appropriate, peer-reviewed journals (or publication in other form as appropriate for the field of research). When commenting on the extent to which the thesis contains matter suitable for publication, Examiners are invited to comment on work which has already been published and/or may comment on parts of the thesis which could form the basis of an appropriate publication following some reworking.

Recommendations for award ultimately remain an academic judgement for the appointed examiners. All recommendations for award are considered at the next meeting of the Graduate Board's Progression and Examinations Group. The Graduate Board has delegated authority to the Progression and Examinations Group to ratify examination results and award research degrees, subject to it being satisfied that the criteria for the award of the degree have been met.

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<sup>25</sup> PGRs are reminded that the statement will be shared with their examiners are strongly encouraged not to include personal or sensitive information in their statement. The statement should instead focus on the impact of the pandemic on their research project and any changes required in response to this

# Doctoral College & Operations (Progression & Examination)

Enquiries: [rp\\_examinations@adm.leeds.ac.uk](mailto:rp_examinations@adm.leeds.ac.uk)



**UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS**

## Covid-19 Impact Statement

The University recognises that there will be some situations where progress will have been affected by the Covid-19 pandemic. In some cases there may have been an impact on the research project to such an extent that adjustments needed to be made to a PGR’s individual research plans. This might include changes to the methodology, experimental design, plans for data collection, or refining the scope or the emphasis of the original research project.

PGRs are invited to upload to GRAD alongside their thesis an impact statement which describes any impact of Covid-19 on their research plans and thesis submission. This document will be shared with the Examiners. PGRs are reminded that the statement will be shared with the internal and external examiner(s) and are strongly encouraged not to include personal or sensitive information in their statement. The statement should instead focus on the impact of the pandemic on their research project and any changes required in response to this.

<b>Name of PGR</b>	
Please use the sections below to describe any impact of Covid-19 on your research project. Your statement should focus on how your research project was impacted and any changes you had to make as a consequence E.g. changes to the methodology, experimental design, plans for data collection, or refining the scope or the emphasis of the original research project.	
<b>How the Covid-19 pandemic impacted the original research project plans.</b>	
<b>What steps were taken to mitigate against the disruption.</b>	
<b>Any decisions taken to change direction or focus, or re-design the research plans in response to Covid-19</b>	
<b>PGR Signature/Authorisation:</b>	
<b>Supervisor Signature/Authorisation:</b>	
Please save this document as “Impact Statement” and upload this to GRAD alongside your thesis submission for examination. <b>This document will be shared with the Examiners.</b> Statements can be accepted after thesis submission (by email to <a href="mailto:rp_examinations@adm.leeds.ac.uk">rp_examinations@adm.leeds.ac.uk</a> ) but examiners may not be able to take the statement into consideration if they receive it too close to the date of the viva.	

## Annex 2: Academic Integrity and examination expectations

The University is a signatory to the QAA Academic Integrity Charter and Research Integrity Concordat which outlines our commitment to upholding the highest standards in relation to academic integrity and research integrity respectively. You can find [more detailed definitions and explanations of academic integrity on the website](#). The [Doctoral College academic and research integrity webpage](#) includes advice and information on academic and research integrity, guidance, training and support. You are strongly encouraged to revisit this throughout your studies. If you have any questions or are in any doubt, or if you feel that further advice and guidance is needed, please talk to your supervisor(s), Graduate School or Director of PGR Studies.

The sections below outline the University's expectations around academic integrity in research degree assessments. The University has [procedures for the investigation of allegations of academic misconduct](#). **If you follow the principles and guidance outlined here and in the related policies, you can be sure that the work you present for assessment meets the University's academic integrity expectations.**

### *Plagiarism*

The PGR academic integrity tutorials will give you an overview of academic integrity, and what good academic practice means during your research degree at Leeds. Please [see the website](#) for further information on how to access this tutorial. The [PGR Academic integrity tutorial](#) is split into two parts: 'Essentials' and 'Advanced'. The advanced tutorial includes a unit on viva expectations and practice. You can revisit these units at any time, and are strongly encouraged to do so before assessment points.

The [University library website](#) also provides information about academic integrity and how to avoid plagiarism, which is relevant to your practice as a postgraduate researcher.

You will be required to complete a statement of academic integrity in GRAD when you submit your thesis for examination which confirms that the thesis is your own work, that you have not presented anyone else's work as your own; that you have read and understood the University's published rules on plagiarism; and agreement for screening of the thesis to verify the absence of plagiarised material. All theses will be submitted to Turnitin and the Turnitin Originality Report will be provided to the examiners alongside the thesis.

### *Viva examination*

The purpose of the viva is to ensure that the work you have submitted for examination reaches the University standards for the degree, that the work submitted is your own, and that you understand and have intellectual ownership of the work you have submitted.

The most productive way to approach the viva is to regard it as an academic discussion about your work – this is your chance to discuss what you have been working on with two or three other academics from outside your supervision team. It is also an opportunity to discuss your work with experts in the field - including plans for publication and further development. At the same time, the viva is a formal University examination so there are some formal requirements and it is important that you are aware of what the University's expectations are for a viva examination and what might constitute a breach of examination regulations.

The [PGR Academic 'Advanced' tutorial](#) includes unit on viva expectations and practice which covers in more detail the following:

*(a) Materials in the viva*

You should have a copy of your thesis with you. This may be an electronic version open on the computer or a printed copy. Please refer to your copy of the thesis when needed, for example if it's helpful when discussing equations, diagrams etc. We encourage you to re-read your thesis in preparation for your viva. If you want to add notes you can do so. You may want to mark errors, add thoughts or use it as a quick way to find particular sections on the day. Many PGRs use post-it notes or similar to help with this, but any form of annotation is acceptable.

In general, it acceptable for you to bring with you to your viva material that you created during your studies. Sometimes it may be useful for you to have access to other material you created during your studies. Examples of this include:

- Any solely or jointly-authored publications.
- Any supplementary data/material.
- Your lab books (where relevant e.g. in STEM disciplines).
- Longer versions of material in the thesis.
- Preliminary ideas/experiments that you left out, but which still informed the direction of your research.

This list is not exhaustive. The key thing is that this is material created by you during your studies.

If you are unsure of whether any material you want to have in the examination will be allowed you should check with your Supervisor. Also, it is important that any materials additional to the thesis should be declared to the examiners at the start of your viva.

In general, other third-party material (this means any material not created by you during your studies) is not permitted in the viva. This includes materials in printed or physical form as well as those in electronic format. You should not be referring to any material that you did not create yourself (papers, books, online references etc.) during the viva. Any case of suspected examination misconduct, including accessing third-party material during the viva, could be considered a breach of University examination procedures. It is therefore important that you do



not access any unauthorised materials during your viva examination. If you are not sure, talk to your Graduate School, Supervisor or Director of PGR Studies.

### *(b) Attendees at the viva*

Your thesis examination will be attended by you, your external examiner(s) and an internal examiner(s). In some cases an independent chair may be appointed. Optionally, you may invite one of your supervisors to attend as an observer (this would only be at your invitation, and if you do invite your supervisor please remember that they are not allowed to take part in the viva.). If you have more than one supervisor only one can be invited to attend your viva.

It may have been agreed, as a reasonable adjustment, that the presence of a supporter, support worker, note taker or specialist mentor is allowed. Please contact your Graduate School if you need to discuss any reasonable adjustments for your viva. Your Graduate School will let the transfer panel/examiners know of this arrangement before the viva. No other parties are permitted to attend the transfer or final examination.

This will be particularly important if you will be completing your viva remotely (online). It is expected that you will be alone during the examination. No-one else should be with you during your examination. If you will be completing your viva online it is important that you will be located somewhere that is suitable for a University examination. This could be in an office space/meeting room at your place of work or a partner Institution. If you will be at home, this will need to be a space where you are confident you will be alone and undisturbed during the examination. If you are not sure, talk to your Graduate School, Supervisor or Director of PGR Studies.

### *Third-party Proof-Reading*

The [PGR Proof-Reading Policy and Guidance](#) explains in detail what work you can have proof-read and what support is permitted from a third-party proof-reader. You can have your thesis proof-read by a third party before submission for examination – or as part of any minor corrections after your viva - following the guidance in the policy. Specific rules on what is permitted by a third-party proof-reader apply. Please see the policy. Any use of a third-party proof-reader must be declared in your thesis (please [see the earlier section of the Guide for the wording you should use](#)).

### *Artificial Intelligence*

The University has approved detailed guidance on using generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools in your research degree studies. From July 2024, this replaces the former PGR Position Statement which was published (from September 2023) as an Annex to this Proof Reading Policy and Guidance. You can [view the Generative AI Guidance for Postgraduate Researchers here](#).

The Generative AI Guidance for Postgraduate Researchers is intended to ensure that any use of Generative AI (Gen AI) is effective, ethical and transparent. The guidance has been developed to cover the specific expectations for assessment at PGR level. You should be aware of the guidance for PGRs and ensure that any use of Gen AI tools remains within the guidelines set out in the detailed guidance. Any use of AI tools must be declared in your thesis (please [see the earlier section of the Guide for the wording you should use](#))

### *Acknowledging the work of others*

Acknowledging the work of other researchers is a fundamental principle of research and academic integrity and all PGRs are expected to observe and maintain high standards of conduct. Where you have worked with others, or where you are presenting other people's work you must fully acknowledge this in your thesis. Acknowledging the work and contributions of others also means that your examiners will be able to clearly identify your own work to be able to assess that you have made a substantially original contribution, at the appropriate level, to merit the award of the degree.

There are various ways you might need to do this in your thesis, and your Supervisors will be best placed to help you think about these matters and consider any acknowledgements needed and the most appropriate way to reflect these in your thesis. Examples are covered in earlier sections of this Guide including where your thesis includes [work from jointly-authored publications](#) or how you may need to use your [acknowledgements page](#) to recognise and credit those who have assisted with your work, and any specialist assistance or advice which may have been given.