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**Research Degrees**

**The Open University**

**Thesis Submission Guidelines**

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| **Introduction** |
| The procedure for the submission of a thesis/portfolio of work is outlined in the following sections of the regulations:   * MPhil/PhD: RD 17.1 – RD 17.9 * Professional Doctorates: PD 15.1 - PD 15.8 * PhD by Published Work: PW 10.1 – PW 10.5 * Higher Doctorates: HD 8.1 – HD 8.3   Please read the regulations prior to consulting this document. The regulations contain information that will not be repeated here. A flow chart outlining the responsibilities at each stage is provided in [Figure 1](#_bookmark0). |
| **Your Thesis** |
| A PhD, MPhil or Professional Doctorate OU dissertation is normally a monograph, that is, a single, coherent narrative that articulates the thesis and the evidence that supports it. Any additional elements (e.g. non-book components) must be properly integrated into the narrative to provide a coherent and comprehensive whole. The dissertation must satisfy OU standards of presentation and the QAA doctoral characteristics. |
| **Thesis/Portfolio of Work Abstract** |
| The abstract should not exceed 300 words. Students who were given permission, on registration, to submit a thesis in Welsh or Gaelic, should also provide an English translation of the abstract.  A copy of the abstract should be bound into the thesis when submitted for examination. In addition, students should submit a separate copy to the Research Degrees Team. |

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| **Presentation of the thesis for examination** |
| The thesis should be presented on good quality international A4 paper (297mm x 210mm).  Doubled-sided printing may be used for theses, provided that the paper is sufficiently opaque to prevent show-through.  The text must be either 1.5 spaced or double spaced.  The font and size of the text are not specified; however, all text (including captions, footnotes, and appendices) must be easily legible, and so a minimum of 8pt for footnotes and 10pt for main text and appendices is recommended.  The pages should be numbered consecutively. For a thesis with more than one volume, numbering should continue across all volumes.  The quality of the printing of the thesis should be at a publishable standard. The margins must be wide enough to allow for subsequent binding.  The minimum requirement is:   * inside margin - 40mm * top and outside margins - 15mm * bottom margin - 20mm |
| **Title page** |
| The title page must provide the following information:   * the student’s full name * the thesis title * the degree for which it has been submitted * the appropriate discipline or disciplines * the name of the sponsoring and collaborating establishments, if registration has been on this basis. * the month and year of submission for examination (or resubmission for examination, if applicable). |
| **Dedication, Acknowledgements** |
| If a dedication and/or acknowledgements are included, they should be immediately after the Abstract page, before the Table of Contents. |
| **Table of Contents** |
| There should be a contents page. Optionally, and where appropriate, lists of tables and figures, glossary, publications by the candidate, and/or a list of any items not bound with the thesis (e.g., supporting digital media, maps, plans, etc.) should appear after the Table of Contents. The Table of Contents should list in sequence, with page number, all relevant subdivisions of the thesis, including the titles of chapters, sections and subsections, any appendices, the list of references etc. Where the thesis comprises more than one volume, the title page, abstract and table of contents must appear in each volume. |
| **Footnotes** |
| The regulations do not make any recommendations about the positioning of footnotes. Footnotes may be positioned at the bottom of the page, at the end of each chapter, or at the end of the thesis. The positioning should be consistent. |
| **Citations and referencing** |
| Citations and referencing should conform to practice within the discipline. Typically, references should be alphabetical by author, following a standard format such as the Harvard system.  Each listed reference should enable the reader to identify the work cited and to locate the specific passage referred to. |
| **Bound copies for examination** |
| Examination copies may be soft bound. You are usually required to provide 3 softbound copies of your examination thesis. There are occasions where additional copies may be required, and you will be informed if this is the case.   * The method of binding is not prescribed but it should be sufficiently robust to survive postage and handling so that pages do not come loose (i.e., so that the pages remain secure in the cover when the volume is opened fully). * Loose pages in a wallet folder are not acceptable. * The covers should be made of cardboard or a stronger material. You are advised to consult your supervisors about suitable binding. |
| **Electronic copies for examination** |
| You will also need to submit an electronic copy of your thesis at submission. The electronic copy should be submitted in PDF format to the Research Degrees Team. |
| **Outsize documents** |
| Any maps, plans, diagrams etc. that are too large to bind with the thesis may be submitted in a separate portfolio.  The documents should be produced on good quality material and cross-referenced to the thesis. A list of contents should be included in both the thesis and the portfolio. |
| **Non-book components** |
| Any non-book components (i.e., material in non-text form such as digital media, film, software etc. that are not incorporated into the main body of the thesis) should be recorded by a suitable process on a good quality stock. The system used should produce a durable item suited to preservation over a long period without excessive deterioration of the message.  The item should be suited to digital media, such as images, audio files, drawings, software, etc. and be provided in a suitable format for viewing or playback on technology in use at the University. Where possible, digital non-book contributions should comply with existing standards appropriate for the type of media (e.g. 3D, hypertext, image audio).  An itemised list of the non-book components should be included in the text component of the thesis. |
| **Appendices** |
| Appendices are treated as additional chapters and should follow the main text. Appendices are used to provide supporting material and/or data lists, documents, commentaries, tables or other evidence that, if included in the main text, would interrupt its flow. The style of appendices should be consistent with that of the main text. Long appendices may be divided into sections (e.g. Appendix A.1) with corresponding subsection numbering. This must be entered in the table of contents. Short appendices may be attached to individual chapters, as an extra section.  Appendices are included in the word count (with the exception of a Professional Doctorate thesis). |
| **Submission of examination copies** |
| You can submit your examination copies, in person, to the Research Degrees Team in the Graduate School, in [Charles Pinfold building](http://www.open.ac.uk/about/main/sites/www.open.ac.uk.about.main/files/files/ecms/web-content/Campus-Map.pdf). Please follow the signage upon entering the building. The electronic copy should be emailed to the Research Degrees Team by 11.59pm on your submission deadline.  If your submission deadline is on a weekend or a University closure day, then you should submit your copies to the main Security lodge by your submission deadline, and ensure you submit your electronic copy, by email to the Research Degrees Team, by 11.59pm.  You may also post your examination copies to the Research Degrees Team. The address can be found at the end of this document. |
| **Post-Exam Requirements** |
| **Please note that hard copies are no longer required for final submission.**  An electronic copy of the final version of the thesis should be submitted to the Library via Open Research Online. Please see [Figure 2](#_bookmark1) for the ORO process. Additional advice is available online <http://www.open.ac.uk/library-research-support/open-access-publishing/etheses>  If you have research data or other digital material associated with your thesis please read the guidance on how to upload it to Open Research Data Online <http://www.open.ac.uk/library-research-support/open-access-publishing/etheses>.  For thesis that have a non-book component please contact [library-research-support@open.ac.uk](mailto:library-research-support@open.ac.uk) to discuss your options.  A copy of the Electronic Thesis Deposition Form should be submitted to the Research Degrees Team.  Further information on the submission an electronic copy of the thesis/portfolio of work is outlined in the following sections of the regulations:   * MPhil/PhD: RD 20.1 – RD 20.5 * Professional Doctorates: PD 18.1 – 18.5 * PhD by Published Work: PW 13.1 * Higher Doctorates: HD 11.1   Please read the regulations prior to consulting this document. The regulations contain information that will not be repeated here. |
| **Access to theses** |
| The electronic copy of the thesis is normally lodged in the library in accordance with the [Open Access policy](http://www.open.ac.uk/library-research-support/open-access-publishing/open-university-open-access-policy). It is your responsibility to ensure that all issues relating to third party copyright have been resolved. Further guidance can be found at <http://www.open.ac.uk/library-research-support/open-access-publishing/etheses>  or by contacting [library-research-support@open.ac.uk](mailto:library-research-support@open.ac.uk) . See RD 20.2 - RD 20.5 or PD 18.2 - PD18.5 regarding theses containing sensitive material. |
| **Plagiarism** |
| Plagiarism is using the work, this includes text, images and ideas, of other people to gain some form of benefit without formally acknowledging that the work came from someone else. The Open University takes allegations of plagiarism very seriously and is making increasing use of plagiarism detection software.  The plagiarism policy and the code of practice for student discipline can be found on the [Student Policies & Regulations](https://help.open.ac.uk/documents/policies) website.  The Candidate Declaration Form requires the student to confirm that all the work submitted is the student’s own.  In cases of suspected plagiarism, the University will follow the [*Procedure for dealing with allegations of research malpractice or misconduct*](http://www.open.ac.uk/research/sites/www.open.ac.uk.research/files/files/Documents/Procedure-for-dealing-with-allegations-of-research-malpractice-or-misconduct-Final-%20July-%202017.pdf). Should a case of plagiarism be proven, this is a serious offence and The Open University disciplinary procedures will be followed. |
| **Intellectual property rights** |
| The student holds the copyright to the text of their thesis unless otherwise specified in a contractual agreement with a sponsor.  Information about the University’s policy concerning the management and exploitation of intellectual property may be found in the student handbook. |
| **Research Degrees Team Contact Details** |
| Research Degrees Team  Graduate School  Level 3, Charles Pinfold Building  The Open University  Milton Keynes  MK7 6AA  Phone: +44 (0)1908 653806  Email: [research-degrees-office@open.ac.uk](mailto:research-degrees-office@open.ac.uk) (directly supported students)  Email: [research-degrees-arc@open.ac.uk](mailto:research-degrees-arc@open.ac.uk%20) (ARC students)  Map: [www.open.ac.uk/about/main/sites/www.open.ac.uk.about.main/files/files/ecms/web-content/Campus-Map.pdf](http://www.open.ac.uk/about/main/sites/www.open.ac.uk.about.main/files/files/ecms/web-content/Campus-Map.pdf) |



Figure 2. eThesis Deposition on Open Research Online (ORO)

Start

Have you ensured that any

copyrighted material owned by a

third party is cleared?

Is your thesis subject to an

embargo or confidentiality

agreement?

Contact library

-

research

-

support@open.ac.uk for

advice regarding the

deposition of your thesis

Using your OUCU, log into the User area of ORO: <http://oro.open.ac.uk/cgi/users/home>

No

Yes

Yes

Do you have an OU Computer

Username (OUCU)?

No

No

Click

**New Item**

and select

**Electronic**

**Thesis**

Click

**Next**

Complete: **Thesis Type, Title, Abstract, Academic School/Unit, Authors/Creators** and **Contact Email addresses**. Click **Next**

Follow the instructions to Upload your

thesis. Click

**Next**

Click

**Submit Now**

Thesis details will be checked by

Research Degrees Team and Library

before being made live in ORO

Yes