

Research Degrees The Open University Thesis Submission Guidelines

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.

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 research degree characteristics (Appendix 1 of the [Research Degree Regulations](#)).

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.

Presentation of the thesis for examination

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.

In order to accommodate printing if required the format of the thesis should be at a publishable standard. The margins must adhere to the following parameters.

The minimum requirement is:

- inside margin - 40mm
- top and outside margins - 15mm
- bottom margin - 20mm

Word count

The total word count is listed in the regulations:

- PhD/MPhil: RD 17.5
- Professional Doctorates: PD 15.5

Information about an overlength thesis can be found in the above regulations.

The word count for PhD and MPhil includes contents pages, the main body of the thesis, footnotes, references, and appendices. It does not include abstract or acknowledgements.

The word count for Professional Doctorates includes contents pages, the main body of the thesis, footnotes and references. It does not include appendices, abstract or acknowledgements.

There is no word limit for PhD by Published Works as it is a portfolio of work.

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
<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>
Footnotes
<p>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.</p>
Citations and referencing
<p>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.</p> <p>Each listed reference should enable the reader to identify the work cited and to locate the specific passage referred to.</p>
Electronic copies for examination
<p>You will 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 through PGR Manager https://doctoral-research-system.open.ac.uk/.</p>
Outsize documents

Any maps, plans, diagrams etc. that cannot be attached as a file on PGR Manager 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.

These should be delivered to the Research Degrees Team office for distribution and not sent directly to examiners.

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.

Any file that cannot be attached with your submission on PGR Manager should be sent to the Research Degrees Team for distribution and not sent directly to examiners.

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

Your thesis should be uploaded to PGR Manager <https://doctoral-research-system.open.ac.uk/> before your submission deadline. Go to your project page and then Examination. Open the Thesis Submission stage and upload the final version of your thesis as well as fill out the online candidate declaration form. You must ensure your notice of submission is complete before you can submit your thesis.

Follow instructions on the system and progress until the status of your thesis submission shows it is with your supervisor. At this point you have submitted your thesis.

Please ensure you upload the correct version of your thesis. You will not be able to change your thesis once you have uploaded it.

Post-Exam Requirements

Please note that hard copies are not required for final submission.

You will receive an email notification once all academic requirements have been met. At this point an electronic copy of the final version of the thesis should be submitted to the Library via Open Research Online. Please see [Figure 1](#) 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 to discuss your options.

A copy of the Electronic Thesis Deposition Form should be submitted to the Research Degrees Team through PGR Manager.

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](#). 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. 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. Should a case of plagiarism be proven, this is a serious offence, and The Open University disciplinary procedures will be followed.

The Candidate Declaration Form requires the student to confirm that all the work submitted is the student's own.

The [Plagiarism guidance for Postgraduate Researchers](#) module should be completed by all PGR students.

The plagiarism policy and misconduct policy can be found on the [Graduate School Network](#) website.

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

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Map:

www.open.ac.uk/about/main/sites/www.open.ac.uk/about/main/files/files/ecms/web-content/Campus-Map.pdf

Figure 1. eThesis Deposition on Open Research Online (ORO)

