

# Examiners' Joint Report and Recommendation Form: Doctoral Programmes

All postgraduate research awards at the University of Southampton are governed by the [Regulations for Research Degrees and Higher Doctorates](#) and the [Code of Practice for Research Degree Candidature and Supervision](#). The [Guidance for Examiners of Postgraduate Research Awards](#) supplements the information from these sources and should be consulted to aid the completion of this form, but the Regulations and the Code must be consulted where clarification is required or where dispute arises during the examination process.

This form sets out the criteria for assessing the research student and the recommendations that are available to the examiners. It is used to record the examiners' agreed views in relation to the core outcomes of the research degree and to confirm their agreed recommendation. The form must provide a sufficiently detailed statement to justify the examiners' recommendation. A research student must satisfy the examiners in both the thesis and the *viva voce* and they may fail the examination either because of the thesis, the *viva voce*, or both. The examiners may therefore recommend re-examination only in that part in which the research student has failed and this report must therefore address both aspects of the examination.

The form should be completed and signed by all members of the examining team, before being submitted by the chair to the Faculty Graduate School Office [\[insert Faculty name, address and email address\]](#). This should be done within **one working week** of the *viva voce*.

Name of research student	Richard Acton		
Date of <i>viva voce</i>	22/01/21		
Title of thesis	The Epigenomics of Human Ageing		
This report refers to the submission of a revised thesis or an additional <i>viva voce</i>			Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

**Part A** All UK doctorates, regardless of their form, require the main focus of the work of the research student to demonstrate an original contribution to knowledge in their subject, field or profession.

Are you satisfied that the work of the research student demonstrates an original contribution to knowledge in their subject, field or profession?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
---	---	-----------------------------

If YES, please select at least one of the two options below. If NO, the research student cannot be awarded a doctoral degree

1. The contribution has been made through original research	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
2. The contribution has been made through original application of existing knowledge or understanding	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Part B Are you satisfied that the research student has demonstrated the following?**

If the answer to any of these statements is **NO**, the research student cannot be awarded the degree without further work/amendments and, if appropriate, an additional *viva voce*. The examiners may not recommend (a), (b) or (c) in Part D.

If the answer to any of these statements is **YES (SUBJECT TO SPECIFIC AMENDMENT)**, the extent to which amendment is required should be discussed further in the report, with reference to remedial actions and required amendments. The examiners may not recommend (a) in Part D.

If the answer to all of these statements is **YES**, a recommendation of (a), (b), or (c) in Part D should be selected.

	Yes	Yes (subject to specific amendment)	No
The creation and interpretation of new knowledge through original research or other advanced scholarship, of a quality to satisfy peer review, extend the forefront of the discipline and merit publication	X		
<i>Comment here on the extent to which the criteria have not been met</i>			
	Yes	Yes (subject to specific amendment)	No
A systematic acquisition and understanding of a substantial body of knowledge which is at the forefront of an academic discipline or an area of professional practice	X		
<i>Comment here on the extent to which the criteria have not been met</i>			
	Yes	Yes (subject to specific amendment)	No
The general ability to conceptualise, design and implement a project for the generation of new knowledge, applications or understanding at the forefront of the discipline, and to adjust the project design in the light of unforeseen problems	X		
<i>Comment here on the extent to which the criteria have not been met</i>			
	Yes	Yes (subject to specific amendment)	No
A detailed understanding of applicable techniques for research and advanced academic enquiry	X		
<i>Comment here on the extent to which the criteria have not been met</i>			

## Part C Commentary

This section should comment on the research student's thesis and on their performance in the *viva voce*. The examining team may wish to comment on the organisation, structure, presentation, authenticity, content, publishable quality and critical awareness of the subject demonstrated throughout the examination process. The commentary can also be used to reference the statements made in Part B. If the examiners' individual reports expressed significantly different views as to the quality of the work, this should also be addressed. Any required amendments must be clearly specified here so as to ensure that the research student has a clear understanding of what is expected of them. The commentary may include a reference to correction of typographical errors noted in a marked-up copy of the student's thesis but more substantial amendments must be clearly specified below.

Report on the thesis
<p>The two examiners agreed that the thesis was of very high quality. We recommend awarding the degree subject to minor amendments. The main points to address are listed here.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>-Show the negative results of RXRA and CDKN2A in the EWAS, and discuss the possible reasons for the lack of reproducibility with previous report (which was based in a subset of this cohort and a different technology to measure DNA methylation).</li><li>-MeDIP data: make clear that the starting material was the RPM values and include the relevant links for accessing the raw and processed data. Mention the lack of input controls for MeDIP, and discuss how they could influence the results. Discuss the exclusion of chromosome X from the analyses.</li><li>-The motivation of the "study-wide" and "genome-wide" analyses of tRNAs was not clear in the text. Please clarify why the genome-wide approach was also performed.</li><li>-Provide specific details of each of the main cohorts used, eg. a table with demographic and phenotypic information. Eg. source of material, no. males/females etc. and any covariates that may be used in analyses.</li><li>-Include more of the results tables (underlying the figures presented) in the appendix, these may need to be cut down to the top hits, for example. Also check with the faculty about the possibility of submitting supplementary data files with your thesis.</li></ul> <p>Dr Gibson (internal examiner) will return a commented copy of the thesis to the student, with minor typos and clarifications needed, to assist with making the corrections.</p>
Report on the performance of the research student in the <i>viva voce</i>
<p>The two examiners agreed that the work was of very high quality and the defence was outstanding. The candidate has a very deep understanding of all the technical and biological aspects work. He was able to clarify all points raised by the examiners in a satisfactory way, being able to relate his results with other observations, models and hypotheses made by others across different cross-cutting fields of research. He proposed interesting new experiments and analyses that could be done to follow-up the work he did.</p>

## Part D Recommendation

The examiners for the research student shall recommend one of the following outcomes. For research students studying for a research degree with a substantial taught component, recommendations (a) to (f) will also be subject to the satisfactory completion of the taught element of the programme. Note that if this form refers to the submission of a revised thesis or an additional *viva voce*, the examiners may not recommend (d) or (e) as an outcome.

Recommendation							
(a)	That the degree for which the research student has submitted is awarded.						
(b)	<b>X That the degree for which the research student has submitted is awarded subject to minor amendments to the thesis<sup>1</sup> being made by a date specified. Such amendments include: minor errors/omissions of substance, typographical errors, occasional stylistic or grammatical flaws, corrections to references, minor changes to figures, and minor changes to layout, and require no new research. The date specified for the submission of the minor amendments should normally be no later than three months after the formal notification to the research student.</b>						
(c)	That the degree for which the research student has submitted is awarded subject to the correction of modest amendments to the thesis <sup>1</sup> being made by a date specified. Such amendments include: modest errors/omissions of substance and may require limited further analysis but only to an extent which will not affect the originality of the central thesis. The date specified for the submission of the modest amendments should normally be no later than six months after the formal notification to the research student. Should the examiners wish to request a longer time period (of nine months), an academic rationale should be provided below.						
	<table border="1"> <tr> <th>Timeframe</th> <th>Academic Rationale</th> </tr> <tr> <td>Six months</td> <td>Not required</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Nine months</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	Timeframe	Academic Rationale	Six months	Not required	Nine months	
Timeframe	Academic Rationale						
Six months	Not required						
Nine months							
(d)	That the research student is required to attend a further <i>viva voce</i> within three months of the date of the original examination.						
(e)	That the research student is required to submit, by a date specified a revised thesis <sup>1</sup> for the same degree for re-examination (including attendance at an additional <i>viva voce</i> ) on one subsequent occasion. The date specified for submission of the revised thesis should normally be no later than twelve months after the formal notification to the research student;						
(f)	That in the case of a research student who has failed to satisfy the examiners, and where a Master of Philosophy is an exit award, they are invited to apply, by a date specified, for that award in accordance with one of the following recommendations:						
(i)	that the degree of Master of Philosophy is awarded (as per (a) above).						
(ii)	that the degree of Master of Philosophy is awarded subject to minor amendments to the thesis being made (as per (b) above).						
(iii)	that the degree of Master of Philosophy is awarded subject to modest amendments to the thesis being made (as per (c) above).						
(g)	That the degree for which the research student has submitted is not awarded, resubmission is not permitted and the research degree is terminated.						

We, the examining team, have completed the examination of this research student according to the [Regulations for Research Degrees and Higher Doctorates](#) and the [Code of Practice for Research Degree Candidature and Supervision](#) and recommend the outcome as specified above to the Faculty Director of the Graduate School.

External Examiner name		Institution/Department		Date	
Internal Examiner name		School/Faculty		Date	
Additional Examiner name		Institution/Department		Date	

<sup>1</sup> For staff candidates submitting for the award of Doctor of Philosophy by published works, references to the thesis should be taken as referring to the accompanying commentary.

As the Faculty Director of the Graduate School, I have scrutinised the examiners' independent reports and this form in my capacity as Chair of the Faculty Graduate School Committee, and approve their recommendation.

Name		Date	
------	--	------	--