

**For the Academic Policy &  
Regulations Committee**

**University of Birmingham**

**Request for amendments to the Regulations and to the  
Code of Practice on the Assessment of Research Degree Theses**

**Topic and Purpose of the Paper**

1. To seek amendments to:
  - The Regulations in respect of clause 7.4.7 of Assessment Progression and Award concerning minor corrections, major corrections and revision and resubmission of theses.
  - The Code of Practice on the Assessment of Research Degree Theses in respect of clauses A9, B3 and B4 of Appendix A: The Examiners and the Chairperson of the Oral Examination.

**Consultation**

2. This request for these amendments arises from Academic and Student Administration's Postgraduate Research Team having identified situations where examiners have recommended further minor corrections in such a manner as to deviate from normal procedures. In the academic session 2006/07, 14 cases of further minor corrections were required; in 2007/08, to date, 14 cases of further minor corrections have been required.

**Proposals/Recommendations**

3. That a new sub-clause be inserted as 7.4.7.5 to read:
 

*Where the Registered Student is required to make minor/major corrections, the Registered Student is permitted one opportunity to complete the corrections to the satisfaction of the examiners. The award of the degree is withheld until a 'Certification of Correction' is provided by the internal examiner for minor corrections and by all examiners for major corrections. With the approval of Senate or delegated authority, a Registered Student may be permitted to carry out further minor corrections. Any further minor corrections must be included in the examiners' original list of corrections*
4. That the current sub-clauses 7.4.7.5 to 7.4.7.8 be renumbered as 7.4.7.6 to 7.4.7.9 respectively, to allow for the insertion of the above-mentioned new sub-clause as 7.4.7.5.
5. That clause A9 of Appendix A of the Code of Practice on the Assessment of Research Degree Theses be amended to read (insertions underlined):
 

*To complete a 'Certification of Correction' form in cases where a Registered Student has to make minor or major corrections to the thesis. (Note: This will be a joint responsibility with the external examiner where major corrections are required.) Where corrections have not been satisfactorily completed, to prepare and refer a list of*

further minor corrections to the Research Progress and Awards Sub-Panel. Any further minor corrections must be included in the original list of corrections.

6. That clause B3 of Appendix A of the Code of Practice on the Assessment of Research Degree Theses be amended to read (insertions underlined):

*To complete a 'Certification of Correction' form where the Registered Student is required to carry out major corrections. This is a joint responsibility with the internal examiner. Where corrections have not been satisfactorily completed, to prepare and refer a list of further minor corrections to the Research Progress and Awards Sub-Panel. Any further minor corrections must be included in the original list of corrections.*

7. That clause B4 of Appendix A of the Code of Practice on the Assessment of Research Degree Theses be amended to read (insertions underlined):

*To complete a 'Certification of Correction' form where the Registered Student is required to carry out minor corrections, and two external examiners instead of one internal (normally their responsibility to complete the form) have been appointed. Where corrections have not been satisfactorily completed, to prepare and refer a list of further minor corrections to the Research Progress and Awards Sub-Panel. Any further minor corrections must be included in the original list of corrections.*

### **Background**

8. The normal procedure has been that a candidate has one opportunity to submit a corrected thesis. Should further minor corrections be required then the approval of the Research Progress and Awards Sub-Panel is required, and these further corrections (which can only be minor in nature) will have been included in the original list of corrections. In the past year, 14 cases have been referred to the Sub-Panel.
9. In one case, where the candidate was a member of staff, each of the examiners (two externals and one internal) had communicated a list of further corrections before the case had been referred to the Research Progress and Awards Sub-Panel, and it was not clear whether the corrections were additional or had been included in the original reports

### **Arguments to Support Proposals/Recommendations**

10. As the Regulations do not currently contain a clause that deals with further minor corrections, the insertion of sub-clause 7.4.7.5 of the Regulations and the amendment of clauses A9, B3 and B4 of Appendix A of the Code of Practice on the Assessment of Research Degree Theses should alleviate the possibility of any repetition of the above-mentioned problems.

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