

Revised Code of Practice on Assessment and Award of Higher Doctorates

Purpose of Paper

1. APRC is invited to **consider and approve** the revised Code of Practice on the Assessment and Award of Higher Doctorates and a related change to the Code of Practice on the Assessment of Research Degree Theses.

Proposal

2. That the revised Code of Practice on the Assessment and Award of Higher Doctorates (Appendix A with tracked changes shown) is adopted, to take effect from the beginning of the 2009/10 session.
3. That the following amendment to the Code of Practice on the Assessment of Research Degree Theses 7.6 is adopted, to take effect from the beginning of the 2009/10 session (deletions crossed through, additions underlined):

If they new examiners are unable to reach agreement, an appropriately-qualified adjudicator, who may or may not be a member of staff of the University, should be appointed ~~as laid down by the~~ by the Head of College and approved by Senate or delegated authority.

Consultation

4. The attached proposals have been put forward as the result of a working group on the Code of Practice on Assessment and Award of Higher Doctorates, comprising of the following:
 - Dr Allan McKinley (Curriculum Development Officer, Academic and Student Administration, convenor);
 - Professor Stuart Abels (School of Metallurgy and Minerals, College of Engineering and Physical Sciences)
 - Mrs Claire Evans (Postgraduate Research Manager, Academic and Student Administration)
 - Professor Janice Marshall (Director of Education, College of Medical and Dental Sciences)
 - Dr Chris Twine (Assistant Director, Academic and Student Administration)
5. The sections of the Code of Practice on Assessment and Award of Higher Doctorates concerning the DMus as composer have been reviewed by Professor John Whenham, Head of the Department of Music, School of Humanities, in consultation with senior colleagues within the Department of Music.

Background

6. The University reserves the right to award Higher Doctorates, as listed in Ordinance 4.1.1 (e).
7. The procedure for applying for, submitting and assessing and awarding a Higher Doctorate is currently detailed in the Code of Practice on the Assessment and Award of Higher Doctorates. This was created to take force

from the beginning of the 2008-09 session, the various components previously being Regulations 4.5.1-2, 4.5.4 (iv-v) and 4.8.¹

8. The number of applications for Higher Doctorates fluctuates and is never particularly high, with an average of two or three successful completions a year. However, due to the unique nature of each Higher Doctorate, each submission is time-consuming for all staff involved in the process.
9. Due to the rarity of Higher Doctorates, it is likely that most staff who come into contact with the process have little or no prior experience of Higher Doctorates.
10. The current Code of Practice, and the Regulations which preceded it, have generally felt to be unclear, and the Postgraduate Research Team within Academic and Student Administration report that there has been no recent Higher Doctorate which has been awarded without some confusion caused by the current Code of Practice on Assessment and Award of Higher Doctorates.
11. The Code of Practice on the Assessment of Research Degree Theses allows for the appointment of an adjudicator in the event of a second set of examiners not agreeing on the decision as to the assessment of a thesis. This process has not been used within the last six years.

Arguments to Support Proposal

12. There is a clear need for a more stream-lined Code of Practice on Assessment and Award of Higher Doctorates which will allow all those involved with the process to establish what is required of them and when.
13. A number of clarifications have therefore been made to the existing Code of Practice on Assessment and Award of Higher Doctorates, including the following major changes:
 - a. a separation of the documents needed to notify an intention to submit for a Higher Doctorate from those required as part of the submission; and
 - b. the process for appointing an adjudicator (5.5) has been made clearer, with the Head of College identified as the appropriate individual to make an appointment.
14. The following features that were not previously in the Code of Practice on Assessment and Award of Higher Doctorates have been added:
 - a. the anonymity of the review panel, assessors and adjudicator (if required) has been established, in order to offer them security in making what they feel is the correct decision without fear of adverse comeback and ensure no undue influence can be exerted by candidates (see 3.2, 5.1 and 5.5); and
 - b. time-limits for the decisions of review panels and assessors, as these have not been previously specified. These remain lengthy, reflecting the complex nature of assessing a Higher Doctorate (see 3.3); and
 - c. formalisation of the right of a candidate for a Higher Doctorate to apply again three years after a review panel, assessors or an adjudicator reject the submission, having also received the reports of assessors or the adjudicator (if appropriate). Previously reapplication with only permissible with the permission of Senate or delegated authority, but no process was in place to support this process, which might also

¹ APRC.08.02.08, 16 a.

- appear to be potentially discriminatory or biased (see 3.5 and 5.7); and
- d. candidates shall have the right to suggest to the Head of School names of those they would like and would prefer not to assess their submission. This is not binding on the Head of School, but allows for dealing with professional jealousies and rivalries which might otherwise unduly influence the outcome of the assessment of a Higher Doctorate (see 5.1); and
 - e. details on submission for a DMus as composer of electroacoustic music, reflecting a prevalent research direction within the Department of Music. The proposed clause (4.5.2) translates the already existing requirements of submission for DMus as a composer of acoustic music to an alternative genre.
15. All other changes are non-substantive and designed to make the Code of Practice on Assessment and Award of Higher Doctorates easier to use by setting out the processes involved more effectively.
 16. As noted in 12 b. above, the process for appointing an adjudicator in cases of disputes has been clarified. The same lack of clarity also applies to the appointment of an adjudicator in the Code of Practice on the Assessment of Research Degree Theses, and it is proposed to resolve this lack of clarity by adopting the same process. It should be noted that it is unlikely that this process will be used, as it requires two sets of examiners to fail to agree a decision on a thesis, but that in the event it is required it is preferable to have the process spelled out to avoid undue delay and stress to the student.
 17. The working group on the Code of Practice on Higher Doctorates only agreed the final proposed version of the Code of Practice on Higher Doctorates after the 21st May meeting of APRC; it was felt however that it was important to have a clear procedure in place for the award of higher doctorates for 2009-10, and therefore Chair's Action is sought for the approval of the Code of Practice.
 18. This Code of Practice has been Equality Impact Assessed during preparation.

Allan McKinley
Curriculum Development Officer
Academic and Student Administration

Code of Practice on the Assessment and Award of Higher Doctorates

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Code of Practice shall apply to higher doctorates as listed in Ordinance 4.1.1 (e).

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2. Eligibility

- 2.1 Graduates of this University will be eligible to apply for permission to be admitted to a higher doctorate after the expiration of a minimum of:

- 2.1 .1 Six years after the conferment of the Bachelor's or Undergraduate Master's degree; or

- 2.1 .2 Five years after the conferment of the Master's degree (excluding undergraduate Masters); or

- 2.1 .3 Three years after the conferment of the Doctoral degree.

- 2.2 Graduates of other universities will be eligible to apply for permission to be admitted to a higher doctorate as set out in 2.1.1 - 2.1.3 above, providing that at the time of their application, they must have held a teaching and/or research appointment for two years at this University.

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Doctor of Divinity (DD)¶
Doctor of Engineering (DEng)¶
Doctor of Letters (DLitt)¶
Doctor of Music (DMus)¶
Doctor of Science (DSc)¶
Doctor of Laws (LLD)¶
Doctor of Social Science (DSocSc)¶

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3. Intention to Submit

- 3.1 All candidates should supply the following to Academic Services:

- 3.1 .1 A completed application form, available on request from Academic and Student Administration, showing the summary title of the work to be submitted.

- 3.1 .2 An up-to-date CV, including a full publication list, indicating those pieces which will be submitted for assessment.

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- 3.2 Each application for candidature for a higher doctorate shall be considered by a Review Group, comprising three people, appointed by the Head of the appropriate School in which the candidate's field of study lies. Its membership must include one person internal to the University. Membership of the Review Group may not be disclosed to the candidate.

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- 3.3 The Review Group shall submit a report to Academic and Student Administration within three months of the application being received within the School, stating whether there is a prima facie case for the higher doctorate being awarded, without prejudice to the ultimate decision of the University.

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- 3.4 If the application is approved by the Review Group, the candidate will be advised that they may proceed with their submission within one year of the Review Group's decision.

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- 3.5 Should an application not be approved, the candidate may not apply for a higher doctorate at the University of Birmingham for a further three years.

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3.6 Once an application has been approved, the Head of School should appoint assessors as under 5.1 below.

4. Submission

4.1 The submission shall be prefaced by a synopsis of not more than 5 000 words detailing the candidate's research record, outlining clearly the research interests and achievements through reference to the selected publications. There should be clear evidence that the candidate's contribution has been widely received in the national and international academic community and noted as making an original, substantial and authoritative contribution to knowledge in the candidate's field of study. Where necessary, the candidate should indicate the nature of the contribution to jointly-authored publications. The University reserves the right to consult any of the co-authors or collaborators concerning the statement.

4.2 The candidate must provide copies of all publications which they have indicated they wish to have considered for assessment in 3.1.2 above.

4.3 Any publication submitted in a foreign language will require a translation attested by the applicant.

4.4 Candidates will be required to submit three **hardbound** copies of the submission in the format prescribed by Library Services, together with the prescribed fee, to Academic and Student Administration.

4.5 Candidates for the degree of DMus may submit as a composer, with the following requirements:

.1 for purely acoustic submissions.

Not fewer than three original compositions for different musical combinations must be submitted as exercises: at least one of these combinations shall be for some musical combination not including pianoforte, and at least one of them shall include or consist of a continuous and well organised movement of a substantial nature. Candidates are advised, though not required, to present three copies of recordings of their submitted work.

.2 for electroacoustic submission.

Not fewer than three original compositions; works for instruments or voices with electronics, interactive works, installations and purely acousmatic works are all permissible in any combination (including the possibility of all works being in the same sub-genre). At least one of these works shall include or consist of a continuous and well organised movement of a substantial nature. Candidates are required to submit three copies of all necessary performance materials, together with recordings of the works.

5. Assessment

5.1 Normally one internal and two external assessors shall be appointed by the Head of School. The candidate shall have the opportunity to suggest potential assessors and to advise the Head of School as to any potential

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	<u>assessors they do not wish to assess the submission; however, the identity of the assessors shall not be revealed to the candidate.</u>	Deleted: 5.2	... [3]
5.3	The higher doctorate shall be awarded only to candidates who, in the opinion of the assessors, have demonstrated:		
5.3	.1 A contribution of originality and merit to their field of study, and		
5.3	.2 A sustained, consistent and substantial contribution to the advancement of knowledge over a number of years, and		
5.3	.3 Authoritative standing in their field of study, and		
5.3	.4 Seminal publications which have led to extensions or development of knowledge by others, and		
5.3	.5 For the DMus as composer, the submission must show a comprehensive technique at the highest possible standard and possess distinctive quality, in either powers of invention or methods of treatment.		
5.4	Having considered the work, the assessors shall submit individual reports to the <u>Academic and Student Administration</u> , with a recommendation that:	Deleted: Senate or delegated authority	
5.4	.1 The <u>appropriate Higher Doctorate</u> be awarded, or	Deleted: joint	
5.4	.2 That <u>a Higher Doctorate</u> be not awarded.	Deleted: degree	
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5.5	Where the assessors' recommendations differ, an <u>appropriately qualified</u> adjudicator, <u>who may or may not be a member of staff of the University</u> , shall be appointed <u>by the Head of College and approved by Senate or delegated authority</u> . <u>The identity of the adjudicator shall not be revealed to the candidate.</u> The adjudicator shall be given access to the <u>submission and the assessor's</u> reports and shall make a final recommendation.	Deleted: or are unable to reach a joint recommendation	
5.6	<u>Candidates where the assessors or adjudicator recommend that the Higher Doctorate be not awarded shall be sent the assessors' (and adjudicator's if applicable) reports.</u>	Deleted: The procedure for appointing an adjudicator shall be as laid down by the Senate or delegated authority.	
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5.7	<u>Candidates may reapply for candidature after three years where assessors or adjudicator recommend that the Higher Doctorate be not awarded.</u>	Deleted: 6	
5.7		Deleted: be permitted, at the discretion of the Senate or delegated authority, to	
5.8	<u>Where assessors or adjudicator recommend that the Higher Doctorate be not awarded candidates shall have the normal right of appeal as set out in the Code of Practice on Primary Appeals.</u>	Deleted: degree	
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- 3.1 .3 A two or three page synopsis of the candidate's research record, outlining clearly the research interests and achievements through reference to publications by number. There should be clear evidence that the publications have been widely received in the national and international academic community and noted as making an original, substantial and authoritative contribution to knowledge in the candidate's field of study.
- 3.1 .4 A numbered list of publications that are to be included in the submission, labelled clearly to indicate:
- Papers in refereed journals
 - Refereed conference proceedings
 - Books, monographs
 - Review articles
 - Other (for example, creative work in the form of published plays or poetry (for DLitt), music (for DMus))
- Reference should be made by an asterisk (*) to the ten most significant publications.
- 3.1 .5 A statement indicating the nature and contribution by the candidate in papers involving joint authorship, through reference to each numbered publication should be included. The University reserves the right to consult any of the co-authors or collaborators concerning the statement.[A.S.1]
- 3.2 Other work including that shown to have been accepted for an awaiting publication may be included and so marked in the numbered list of publication, but will be considered only as supplementing the main body of printed and published work.
- 3.3 Any work which has been included, or is about to be included, in a submission for any other degree or diploma in either this University or any other higher education institution or professional or learned body may be included and so marked in the numbered list of publications. This work will not be taken into account in assessing a submission, but will be regarded as supplementing the remainder of the work.

- 4.2 If work is submitted in a foreign language, an attested translation may be required.

- 5.2 The assessment shall be primarily of the printed and published work submitted by the candidate but may also include an oral examination, any further written or practical test that the assessors may consider necessary.