1 Introduction

These guidelines outline the procedures for the examination and award of research degrees where the candidate has died prior to submission of their thesis. It is intended to provide information for heads of discipline, supervisors and examination panels. It should be read in conjunction with the EdD Examination Guidelines (EdD_EX10). If you have any queries or require advice please contact the Research Degrees Office.

External address: Research Degrees Office
The Open University
Milton Keynes
MK7 6AA

Internal address: Research Degrees Office
Ground Floor
Charles Pinfold Building

Tel: (01908) 659616
Email: research-degrees-EdD@open.ac.uk

2 Report from supervisor(s):

The supervisor(s) are asked to submit a report summarising the work the student had yet to complete. Ideally it should be supported by a project plan that had been agreed with the student or notes from meetings/emails that would evidence the quality of the intended but missing work. This report will be enclosed with the thesis for each member of the examination panel.

3 Duties of the examiners:

As per Section 4.2 and Section 8 of the EdD Examination Guidelines (EdD_EX10), each examiner should independently prepare a Pre-viva report, which is sent electronically to the examination panel chair. Following this, the examiners should discuss the thesis and agree a final report and recommendation. It is acceptable for the examiners to meet via telephone or video conference if not able to easily meet in person. The examination panel chair should participate in the conference call/video link.

4 Criteria for the award of the degree

To be awarded the EdD degree, the examiners should be satisfied that had the student been able to complete the thesis, it would have evidenced the following:

(a) good style and presentation

(b) demonstrate reflection on the relationship between theory and practice in education, in particular, the thesis should:

• address research questions of relevance to and arising from educational practice/policy
• demonstrate a sound understanding of the main issues and debates in the area under investigation
• provide a clear and well-argued rationale for the research questions addressed – in terms of existing research, methodology, theory and educational practice/policy
• locate the professional focus of the research within relevant academic traditions

(c) make a significant contribution to the theory and practice of education, in particular, the thesis should:
• address research questions which either have not been addressed previously or have been addressed in different ways
• clearly demonstrate how the research findings contribute to and advance knowledge of the research area under investigation, in relation to existing methodology, research findings, theory and educational practice/policy
• identify further research questions/issues
• explain in what ways the research provides a significant contribution to the theory and practice of education
• state the implications of the research for professional practice and policy in education
• report research, which is of potentially publishable quality in professionally relevant, refereed journals

(d) show an ability to select and apply appropriate research methods, in particular, the thesis should:
• demonstrate that the research methods, data and analyses are appropriate means of addressing the research questions
• provide a clear and concise description of the research which has been carried out, including methodology, ethical issues, findings, analyses

(e) exhibit a high level of critical analysis, in particular, the thesis should:
• provide a thorough, critical, balanced and integrated review of the literature(s) relevant to the research questions being addressed, including reviews of research findings, theory and educational practice/policy based on primary sources.
• critically review relevant epistemological and methodological issues and demonstrate how these apply to your research.
• demonstrate how the research findings relate to the research questions being addressed.

5 Recommendations available to examiners

The examiners may make one of the following recommendations.

5.1 Award the degree by Aegrotat

The recommendation of an aegrotat award of the EdD degree should be made if the examiners are of the view that the thesis with the supervisors’ report shows evidence that the criteria of the award of the EdD have been met.

5.2 Fail

This recommendation should be made if, the examiners are of the view that the thesis with the supervisors’ report does not show evidence that the criteria of the award of the EdD has been met. If this recommendation is made, the examination panel report form (EX33 EdD) must include details of why the thesis failed to meet the requirements of the EdD degree.

6.0 Award of the Degree
Following the recommendation that the Posthumous award of the EdD degree should be made, three bound copies of the work should be submitted to the Research Degrees Office. The Programme Leader is responsible for arranging both the payment for, and binding of, the thesis. The title page of each bound copy should include the words ‘Aegrotat Award’. Two copies will be for deposition in the University Library, the third will be held by CREET. The degree will be conferred and the student’s family will be invited to attend a degree ceremony.

7.0 Sections of the EdD Examination Guidelines (EdD_EX10)

The following sections of the EdD Examination Guidelines (EdD_EX10), also apply to Aegrotat Awards:

- Section 3: Nomination and appointment of the examination panel
- Section 4: Duties of the examiners
- Section 5: Fees and expenses
- Section 6: Submission
- Section 8: Independent pre-viva reports
- Section 12: The exam panel report form
- Section 13: Ratification of the examination result