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
- PhD by Published Work: PW 10.1 – PW 10.5
- Professional Doctorates: PD14.1 - PD 14.6
- 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. A flow chart outlining the responsibilities at each stage is provided in figure 1.

Your thesis

A PhD or MPhil 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 doctoral characteristics.

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.

A copy of the abstract should be bound into the thesis when submitted for examination. In addition students should submit a separate copy to the Research Degrees Office.

Presentation of the thesis

The thesis should be presented on good quality international A4 paper (297mm x 210mm). Doubled-sided printing may be used for theses, provided that the paper is sufficiently opaque to prevent show-through.
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.

The quality of the printing of the thesis should be at a publishable standard. The margins must be wide enough to allow for subsequent binding.

The minimum requirement is:

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

**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**

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. 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.

**Footnotes**
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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Citations and referencing</th>
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<tr>
<td>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. Each listed reference should enable the reader to identify the work cited and to locate the specific passage referred to.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Binding the examination copies of the thesis</th>
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<tr>
<td>Examination copies may be soft bound. You are usually required to provide 3 softbound copies of your examination thesis. There are occasions where additional copies may be required and you will be informed if this is the case.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• The method of binding is not prescribed but it should be sufficiently robust to survive postage and handling so that pages do not come loose (i.e., so that the pages remain secure in the cover when the volume is opened fully).</td>
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<td>• Loose pages in a wallet folder are not acceptable.</td>
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<td>• The covers should be made of cardboard or a stronger material. You are advised to consult your supervisors about suitable binding.</td>
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<th>Examination electronic copies</th>
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<td>You will also need to submit an electronic copy of your thesis at submission. The electronic copy should be submitted in PDF format to the Research Degrees Office.</td>
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<th>Outsize documents</th>
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<tr>
<td>Any maps, plans, diagrams etc. that are too large to bind with the thesis may be submitted in a separate portfolio.</td>
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<td>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.</td>
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<th>Non-book media</th>
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<td>Any non-book media (i.e., material in non-text form such as digital media, film, software, audiotape, etc.) should be recorded by a suitable process on a good quality stock. The system</td>
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</table>
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). The item should be provided with an appropriate container approved by the Director of Library Services and bear on its exterior the particulars listed above for thesis covers.

Advice on media standards can be sought from The Open University Library.

An itemised list of the non-book media should be included in the text component of the thesis.

### 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 the EdD thesis).

### Post Award Requirements

The procedure for the submission of the print and electronic archive copies of the thesis/portfolio of work is outlined in the following sections of the regulations:

- MPhil/PhD: RD 20.1 – RD 20.5
- PhD by Published Work: PW 13.1
- Professional Doctorates: PD 17.1
- Higher Doctorates: HD 11.1

Please read the regulations prior to consulting this document. The regulations contain information that will not be repeated here.

### Print Copies

If the student is successful, 2 print copies of the thesis and any supporting material (e.g. diagrams and non-book media) should be submitted to the Research Degrees Office within one month of the letter or email confirming the award. If any problems are anticipated regarding the ability to meet this deadline, the student should contact the Research Degrees Office.

One print copy will be deposited in the University Library and should be hard bound. The second print copy will be held by the academic unit or by the Affiliated Research Centre and maybe soft bound in the same way as the examination copies. Any other copies requested, for example for a collaborating establishment or establishments, must also be provided by the student.
Binding the archive copies

The archive copies must be hard bound.

- The binding shall be of a fixed kind in which leaves are permanently secured.
- The thesis shall be bound within boards in black. The boards shall have sufficient rigidity to support the weight of the work when standing upon a shelf.
- The title of the thesis, the candidate's name, the degree for which the thesis has been submitted (e.g., PhD), and the year of submission (or resubmission, if appropriate) should appear on the front cover, in that order from top to bottom. The lettering must be gold in at least 19-point (5 mm) type.
- The spine of the work shall be lettered in gold to show, in order, reading from top to bottom:-
  - The title of the thesis
  - The number of each volume (e.g., Vol 1) if the work consists of more than one volume.
  - The candidate's name
  - The degree for which the thesis has been submitted
  - The year of submission (or re-submission, as appropriate) at the foot of the spine.

It is the responsibility of the student to ensure that the library copies of the thesis are complete and in good condition, with the correct information on the cover and title page. Theses are used by other scholars and a poorly presented thesis reflects badly on the student as the author and the University. Only theses which comply fully with the binding and presentation criteria set out in the research degree regulations and this document can be accepted for deposition.

Electronic Copy

One electronic copy of the thesis should be submitted to Library via ORO. Please see figure 2 for the ORO process. Additional advice is available online http://oro.open.ac.uk/help/helpeth.html.

Access to theses

Both print and electronic copies of the thesis are 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 copyrights have been resolved. See RD 20.2 to RD 20.5 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.
The plagiarism policy and the code of practice for student discipline can be found on [Essential Documents](#).

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

In cases of suspected plagiarism the University will follow the Procedure of dealing with allegations of academic misconduct and malpractice. Should a case of plagiarism be proven, this is a serious offence and The Open University disciplinary procedures will be followed.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Intellectual property rights</th>
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<tr>
<td>The student holds the copyright to the text of his or her thesis unless otherwise specified in a contractual agreement with a sponsor.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Information about the University’s policy concerning the management and exploitation of intellectual property may be found in the student handbook.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Research Degrees Office Contact Details</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Research Degrees Office, Charles Pinfold Building, The Open University, Milton Keynes MK7 6AA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+44 (0)1908 654882, or email <a href="mailto:research-degrees-office@open.ac.uk">research-degrees-office@open.ac.uk</a> (directly supported students)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+44 (0)1908 653117 or email <a href="mailto:research-degrees-arc@open.ac.uk">research-degrees-arc@open.ac.uk</a> (ARC students)</td>
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# Figure 1 Submission of Thesis for Examination

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<th>Submission of Thesis for Examination</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Student</strong></td>
<td><strong>Supervisors</strong></td>
<td><strong>Associate Dean Research (or delegate)/ARC coordinator</strong></td>
</tr>
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<td>Send intention to Submit email to RDO/ARC Coordinator, copying in the School/Institute.</td>
<td>Complete and sign Part B of Candidate declaration form and send to RDO/ARC Coordinator for endorsement</td>
<td>In conjunction with Supervision team and Post-Graduate Research Tutor nominate exam panel then send nominated exam panel, Examiner CVs and External Examiners Right to work to RDO for approval by RDC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complete and sign Part A of Candidate Declaration Form and send to Supervisors</td>
<td></td>
<td>If ARC: review and sign Candidate declaration form and send to RDO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Submit hard copies of Thesis for examination to the RDO/ARC Coordinator. Electronic copies are submitted to the RDO only</td>
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Figure 2 eThesis Deposition on Open Research Online (ORO)

Have you ensured that any copyrighted material owned by a third party is cleared?

Yes

Is your thesis subject to an embargo or confidentiality agreement?

Yes

Contact the ORO team at library-research-support@open.ac.uk for advice re the deposition of your thesis

No

No

Do you have an OU Computer user name (OUCU)?

No

Log onto the User Area of ORO using your OUCU http://oro.open.ac.uk/cgi/users/home

Yes

eThesis Information – Complete all of the following sections:
Thesis type
Title
Abstract
Academic Unit/Department
Author
Contact email address

Click the 'Next' button which will take you to Upload

Follow the upload instructions provided to upload your thesis

Click the 'Next' button which will take you to the Copyright Agreement

Click 'Next' button which will take you to "Thesis Submission" Click 'Submit Now'