



**Additional information for
examiners appointed to report on
applications for the degree of**

Master of Arts

Master of Science

Master of Science (Engineering)

Master of Education

When taken by Research

Regulations for the award of Masters by Research

The [Ordinances, Regulations and Programmes of Study for Research Degrees](#)¹ detail the formal regulations and requirements for all of the University's research degrees. Learning Outcomes are attached.

For candidate's who commenced study on 01 September 2012 or later

To qualify for the award of a Masters degree by research each candidate must meet the required learning outcomes and satisfy the examiners that his/her achievement is of sufficient merit through:

- (a) presenting a thesis on the subject of his/her research which interprets and communicates knowledge in their discipline and contains material at a level suitable for publication in accordance with the requirements of the relevant prescribed programme of study, *and*
- (b) presenting him/herself for oral examination and other such tests as the examiners may prescribe.

Types of Recommendation

Examiners are asked to submit **one** of the following recommendations:

- (a) that the degree of Master by Research be awarded with distinction
- (b) that the degree of Master by Research be awarded with distinction, subject to editorial and presentational corrections
- (c) that the degree of Master by Research be awarded
- (d) that the degree of Master by Research be awarded subject to editorial and presentational corrections
- (e) that the degree of Master by Research be awarded subject to the correction of minor deficiencies
- (f) that the application be referred for resubmission for the degree of Master by Research
- (g) that no research degree be awarded

Award with distinction

Where the work is of exceptional merit, the examiners may recommend the award of the degree of Master by research with distinction. In order to recommend the award of the degree with distinction the Examiners must be convinced that a significant proportion of the thesis is of a superior quality to the normal standards required for the award of the degree. The reasons for the award of a distinction must be clearly explained.

¹ Ordinance X (Research Degrees) http://ses.leeds.ac.uk/info/22168/student_support-related_policies/646/ordinances

Examiners may recommend the award of the degree Master by research with distinction, subject to completion of editorial and presentational corrections, but only where the corrections required are of a very minor typographical nature and do not detract in any way from the research achievement. When making this recommendation, the Examiners are asked to confirm that the required editorial and presentational corrections are very minor in nature and do not compromise the academic achievement of the work. Examiners may **not** recommend the award of the degree of Master by research with distinction, subject to completion of minor deficiencies. Examiners may **not** recommend the award of the degree of Master by research with distinction following resubmission after referral.

Learning outcomes

The University's learning outcomes/level indicators for its different academic awards have been developed in the expectation that the learning outcomes will be achieved irrespective of the manner and location of the research and/or delivery of the programme followed by the students concerned. These general statements will be subject to continuous review by the Graduate Board.

Achievement is assessed by the examination of the thesis and performance under oral examination. However, examiners will not be expected to monitor/assess all the Learning Outcomes at the time of the viva. The main emphasis of the viva will be upon the research achievement and it may be difficult at that stage to assess expertise in 'generic and subject/professional skills'. Instead, an ongoing process of monitoring and evaluation should be recorded within the Faculty/School (in the University's system for maintaining a record of the research degree candidature). Within three months of the commencement of study the University requires a training needs analysis to be conducted, and a training plan to be agreed between the PGR and the Supervisor(s). The PGR's progress against the training plan is then reviewed regularly. Examiners may ask that the School make available these records at the viva to enable them to audit the arrangements that have been made. This will typically include the training plan, training record and any relevant extracts from the progress reports where progress with the agreed training plan is reviewed. Examiners are not required to comment on achievement against the learning outcomes as part of their report form, although comments are invited.

For PGRs commencing study before 01 September 2011 the University learning outcomes reflected the then RCUK Joint Statement of Skills for postgraduate research students (JSS). The JSS was subsequently superseded by the Researcher Development Framework (RDF). The RDF incorporates the content of the JSS but also expands the statement to cover researcher skills and attributes from postgraduate researcher through to senior academic. The introduction of the RDF led to some minor modification of the University learning outcomes.

For candidates commencing study from 01 September 2012 onwards

Learning Outcomes for the degree of Master by Research

On completion of the programme students should have shown evidence of being able:

- to interpret and communicate knowledge in their discipline through originality in their application of knowledge and a practical understanding of established techniques of research at a level suitable for publication in reputable journals/publications as appropriate to the field of research;
- to present and defend research outcomes much of which is at, or informed by, the forefront of a discipline or area of professional/clinical practice;
- to demonstrate a detailed knowledge of the subject area and expertise in generic and subject/professional skills;
- to take a proactive and self-reflective role in working and to develop professional relationships with others where appropriate;
- formulate ideas and hypotheses proactively and to develop, implement and execute plans by which to evaluate these;
- to critically evaluate current issues, research and advanced scholarship in the discipline;
- to demonstrate knowledge of and be able to assess, analyse and engage with the ethical and legal context of their research and any ethical and legal implications of their research.

2. Transferable (key) skills

Students will have had the opportunity to acquire the following abilities through the research training and research specified for the programme

- the skills necessary to undertake research at a higher level, for a future career as a researcher and/or for employment in a higher capacity in industry or area of professional/clinical practice;
- evaluating their own achievement and that of others;
- self-direction and effective decision making in complex and unpredictable situations;
- independent learning and the ability to work in a way which ensures continuing professional development.

3. Learning Context

For Master (MA, MEd, MSc and MSc[Eng]) by Research) the learning context will include the analysis of, and decision making in, complex and unpredictable situations. The structure of the programme will provide research training, depth of study and opportunities for drawing upon appropriate resources and techniques. In the case of MDS this may also include clinical skills development. Opportunities will be provided for students to develop:

- interests and informed opinions
- their involvement in the design and management of their learning activities
- their communication of their conclusions;

Students will be expected to progress to fully autonomous study and work.

4. Assessment

Achievement will be assessed by the examination of the candidate's thesis and performance under oral examination. It will involve the achievement of the candidate in:

- evidencing an ability to conduct independent in-depth enquiry within a significant aspect or different aspects of the discipline or area of clinical/professional practice which leads to the production of material at a level suitable for publication;
- drawing on, and selecting appropriately from, a range of research techniques and methodologies in their enquiries into the discipline or area of clinical/professional practice;
- demonstrating the ability to apply breadth and/or depth of knowledge to a complex specialist area;
- drawing on a range of perspectives on an area of study;
- evaluating and criticising received opinion;
- making reasoned judgements whilst understanding the limitations on judgements made in the absence of complete data;
- the written style and overall presentation of the thesis