



If your thesis is referred:

**Guide to the referral and resubmission process for
Postgraduate Researchers (PGRs)**

2019-20

This Guide for referred PGRs is compiled annually by Doctoral College Operations. It gives further advice to PGRs whose thesis has been referred for resubmission. It sets out the University's requirements for the notes for guidance, resubmission and the process for examination of a resubmitted thesis.

The presentation and binding requirements for a resubmitted thesis are the same as those for the first examination. Please refer to the [Guide to the thesis examination process](#) for more detailed advice.

Further support and advice about the research degree thesis examination process is also available in the [Postgraduate Researcher Handbook](#) and on the [Website](#).

This document was updated in May 2020 and outlines temporary arrangements for thesis examination in response to the current situation.

Important information – May 2020

The following section outlines further measures that the University has taken to continue to support our PGRs through the thesis examination process, during this time. Please do get in touch with your Graduate School or with the thesis examination team in Doctoral College Operations if there is anything more that you need to know. For the latest general advice, please check the latest news on our dedicated [coronavirus website](#).

Thesis submission for examination

In response to the current situation, we have moved to online thesis submission only. Theses should be submitted via GRAD as a PDF; soft-bound copies are not required. Your thesis can be submitted and assessed remotely. Further advice on how to do this can be found in the following sections.

If the current situation means that you are not going to be able to meet the deadline for thesis submission, you can apply for an extension, and the University will consider all requests sympathetically. You can apply for an extension using the Suspension/Extension workflow in GRAD. You can find this under the change request menu. Your Graduate Schools can advise you further if you have any questions.

If a second viva is needed

Arrangements have been made for it to be possible for you to complete your viva (if needed) via video streaming, where appropriate. Once again, your Graduate School can provide advice and support. If you prefer to postpone and rearrange your viva, we will be happy to support this. Please contact your Graduate School.

Final thesis submission (after examination and completion of any corrections)

The University has withdrawn the requirement to submit a hard bound copy of your final, corrected thesis for the award of your degree. You only need to upload a PDF copy of your thesis to White Rose Etheses Online. This can be carried out remotely.

If the current situation means that you are not going to be able to meet the deadline for completing any minor corrections to your thesis you can apply for an extension, and the University will consider all requests sympathetically. Once again, your Graduate School can provide advice and support.

The Thesis Examination Section of Doctoral College Operations is happy to help with any queries. The team is working remotely but we are still here and happy to help - please contact us by e-mail to rp_examinations@adm.leeds.ac.uk.

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Referral and notes for guidance

1. 'Referral' for resubmission

A decision to “refer” a thesis is normally interpreted as signifying that, although the thesis is potentially of a standard to merit the award of the degree concerned it does not, at this stage, satisfy the requirements for award and certain sections and/or aspects of the thesis are in need of alteration and improvement and a re-examination of the work will be required. A thesis may also be referred in circumstances where the PGR does not completely satisfy the examiners through their performance at the viva (and in such other tests as the examiners may prescribe) that the award of the degree is justified at this stage.

If the examiners recommend referral for resubmission, you will be required to revise the thesis, which may entail further research or any other activity required by the examiners, and then resubmit this to the University for re-examination. You may be required to attend a second oral examination.

2. Notes for Guidance

Alongside the report on the examination, the examiners are required to prepare Notes for Guidance which outlines the changes which are required. The Notes for Guidance will set out what needs to be done in order for the thesis to reach the standards required for the award of the degree and will specify the sections or aspects of the thesis which are in need of improvement and information about what work is required to enable you to revise the thesis for resubmission to meet the standard required for award.

There is no set format for the notes. These can be arranged on a page by page, chapter by chapter or areas of deficiency basis, whichever is appropriate for the nature of the problems to be solved. The Notes are to assist you in the process of revision and resubmission of the thesis but do not have to include specific editorial comment.

3. When will I receive the Notes for Guidance?

You will not receive your notes for guidance directly from your examiners after your viva. The notes for guidance must be submitted with the examiners' report (prepared after the viva) to Doctoral College Operations (DCO) for scrutiny by the Graduate Board's Examinations Group. The examiners' report and their notes for guidance will be issued to you by DCO after approval by the Examinations Group with a letter describing how to resubmit for re-examination.

DCO aim to send you your approved report and notes for guidance within a period of 6 weeks from receipt of the report and notes for guidance. If for any reason it will not be possible to meet this timescale you will be kept informed. This will either be uploaded to GRAD and a notification

sent to your University email address (if you used the GRAD examination entry form process) or sent to your University email account (if you followed the paper-based examination entry form process). Schools are not permitted to issue informal notes for guidance and any advice given at the time of the viva or immediately after the viva, is informal.

You will receive an email (to your IT account) to confirm that your examiners' report and notes for guidance have been received in DCO with details of when this will be considered by the Group. For referred PGRs, the report and notes for guidance do not have to wait for a full meeting of the Group and are considered on a continuous basis between meetings. In some cases the Group may request additional information for the report or clarification of the Notes for Guidance from the Examiners to ensure that these are clear and unambiguous.

Supervision arrangements during the referral period

4. Supervision during the referral period

In order to keep the resubmission on course before the maximum time limit, it is expected that supervisory contact and support will continue during the referral period. Supervisors are asked to provide up to 6 supervision meetings a year during the referral period. Whilst the responsibility for initiating these supervisions rests with the PGR, the timing and frequency should be agreed between the PGR and the Supervisors.

Whilst the precise nature, pattern and timing of supervisions will vary depending on the stage of the resubmission, and the extent and nature of the work required for resubmission, recommended best practice is that meetings will be held at regular intervals during the referral period (until resubmission) and include at least:

- (i) An early meeting (or equivalent), normally within one month of receipt of the examiners' report and notes for guidance; and
- (ii) A meeting (or equivalent) around the mid-point of the referral period (e.g. around 9 to 12 month point for doctoral PGRs) if the thesis has not been resubmitted.

Supervisions should continue to be recorded in GRAD and may take place in a variety of forms (for example in face to face meetings when the PGR is in the UK or by other means such as video conferencing, telephone, Skype or email where appropriate).

For PGRs in the referral period the University appreciates that supervision may take the form of reading and commenting on draft chapters of the thesis prior to resubmission. PGRs must ensure that they provide their supervisor(s) with re-drafts of work for comment within a reasonable timescale. PGRs should take the advice of their Supervisor whether or not to resubmit their work for examination. PGRs are strongly recommended not to resubmit against their Supervisor's advice. However, PGRs are solely responsible for the decision to resubmit their work for examination.

If an international referred PGR wishes to remain in the UK during the referral period, DCO will contact the relevant School to establish that the PGR does need to be present at the University¹. For international PGRs in the UK during the referral period on a tier 4 student visa, the School must implement regular supervision meetings and contacts in order to monitor attendance and maintain sponsor duties as the University has to be able to prove that the PGR is making progress in their studies and is in full time attendance. In these cases the normal attendance monitoring arrangements must apply with attendance/supervision meetings recorded and attendance and progress monitored as set out in the Attendance Monitoring Policy.

¹ For example where access to a particular piece of equipment is required

5. Role of the examiners during the referral period

**The Examiners must not take a supervisory role during the referral period
You must not send your thesis to the examiners for comment before resubmission**

If the Examiners' recommendation is that the thesis be referred, it is the practice for the original examining team to act again for the resubmission, except in exceptional circumstances.

The roles of examiner and supervisor must be transparently separated during the period between the first examination and the resubmission and the examiners must maintain independence from the work before it is resubmitted. For this reason, **the Examiners must not take a supervisory role during the referral period. You must not send your thesis to the examiners for comment before resubmission.** However, they may be required to provide clarification of the Notes for Guidance. You should consult with your supervisor in the first instance where clarification of the Notes for Guidance is required. The Supervisor may then, if appropriate, contact the Internal Examiner.

6. Registration during the referral period

During the referral period you are entitled to register with the University. No academic fees will be charged for this period of registration (although a resubmission fee is charged when the thesis is resubmitted – see section 8).

If you wish to register during your referral period you should contact the Student Records Section of DCO – rp_student@adm.leeds.ac.uk. Registration during this referral period is optional and can be taken up at any point during the referral period.

Postgraduate researchers who take up the option to register during the referral period are classed as registered whilst referred, awaiting re-examination, and are provided with a student ID card solely for the purpose of using the library and computing facilities during the referral period. Such PGRs are not classed as either full/part-time or overtime students during this period and will not therefore qualify for Council Tax exemption during this period. Further advice is available from the Student Advice Centre of Leeds University Union (LUU).

Examination entry

7. Examination entry form

A minimum of three months before the thesis is resubmitted for examination you must enter for re-examination by completing the Examination Entry Process. Normally the same team of examiners will act for the resubmission except in exceptional circumstances.

If you completed the GRAD examination entry workflow for your first submission:

- You will have a 'task' in GRAD to complete the examination entry workflow again for your resubmission
- The workflow will be automatically populated with the information from your first submission e.g. your thesis title, ethical review and publication information. You can check this and amend (if necessary) for your resubmission
- When you submit the workflow it will move to your Supervisor so they can confirm the team of examiners for your resubmitted thesis.
- You can track the process of the workflow via the status box in GRAD

If you completed the paper-based examination entry form for your first submission:

- From the main GRAD front page select "My project".
 - On the right hand side of your project page select "Thesis examination" and confirm you want to start the record. This opens up two workflows
- (a) Examination Entry:
- You will need to complete the examination entry workflow
 - You can then submit the workflow to your supervisor so they can record the examiners.
 - You can track the progress via the status box in the workflow
- (b) Thesis Submission:
- This workflow will remain open until you are ready to resubmit your thesis.

The workflow/form must be completed and returned to DCO at least 3 months before the resubmission of the thesis. No thesis can be dispatched to the examiners until the examination arrangements for the resubmission have been fully checked and approved by the Examinations Group. Entry workflows received less than 3 months prior to thesis resubmission may delay the dispatch of theses to the examiners and the examination process. Therefore you should start thinking about the examination entry process early in the referral period. The form will remain valid for 12 months from the date of approval by the Examinations Group.

Resubmitting your thesis

8. Deadlines for resubmission

The referral period begins from the date the Report and Notes for Guidance are issued following approval by the Examinations Group. **You may resubmit at any point in the referral period, once the amendments have been made and your thesis is ready for resubmission.** Resubmission must, however, take place within the following time limits.

Doctoral resubmissions (e.g. PhD, MD, EdD, DCLinPsychol, DCLinDent)	within 18 months ²
PhD submission referred for resubmission for MPhil	within 12 months
MPhil submission referred for resubmission for MPhil	within 15 months
Mastership by Research resubmission	within 9 months

You will receive official notification of your deadline for resubmission from DCO in the letter which is sent with your examiners' report and notes for guidance. You should bear in mind that this is the maximum time limit for resubmission and that you may resubmit at any point in the referral period. You are strongly recommended not to submit against your Supervisor's advice although you have the right to do so. You should take the advice of your Supervisor whether or not to submit your work for examination. However, you are solely responsible for the decision to submit your work for examination.

You are bound by your maximum time limit for resubmission of the thesis. It is important that this deadline is adhered to and that you resubmit your thesis for assessment on or before your maximum time limit for submission. Failure to resubmit your thesis for examination by this deadline may lead to you being required to withdraw from your studies. If circumstances arise which may prevent you from resubmitting your thesis by your resubmission deadline you must talk to your School/Faculty Graduate School as soon as possible for advice, otherwise you may seriously compromise your ability to complete your research degree successfully. Please see the [website](#) for advice on suspensions and extensions.

Where the maximum time limit for resubmission falls on a day when the University is closed as a consequence of a holiday period (for instance a Bank Holiday) or a weekend, the deadline for resubmission of a thesis to DCO will be no later than the end of the next working day.

If the current situation means that you are not going to be able to meet your deadline for submission, you can apply for an extension, and the University will consider requests sympathetically. You can apply for an extension using the Suspension/Extension workflow in GRAD (under the change request menu). Your Graduate School can advise you further.

² A referred PhD PGR may, with the permission of the Head of School, choose to resubmit for MPhil. Resubmission must take place within 12 months from the date of issue of the Notes for Guidance.

9. Resubmission process

In response to the current situation, we have moved to online thesis submission only. Theses should be submitted via GRAD as a PDF; soft-bound copies are not required. Your thesis can be submitted and assessed remotely.

10. Document outlining how your revised thesis has responded to the notes for guidance

You must submit, alongside your resubmitted thesis, a summary of how your revised thesis has responded to changes listed by your examiners in the Notes for Guidance. This will assist the examiners when considering your resubmitted thesis. There is no set format for this document and you may present this in a format which best reflects the changes you have made. Sufficient detail, with examples, should be included to clearly show how and where you have responded to the examiners' concerns. If the examiners require a specific format for the response they may do so in the notes for guidance; in which case you should follow the guidance here.

All PGRs awaiting re-examination may continue to use the University facilities, normally for a period of up to 6 months from the date of submission of the thesis. There is no charge for this. The arrangements for this are made at the time of thesis.

11. Resubmission fee

Once your resubmitted thesis is sent for examination the appropriate re-examination fee will be charged. [Student Finance \(Fees\)](#) will contact you about this. The resubmission fees for 2019/20 are as follows, however, please note that this is subject to an increase each academic year and you should contact [Student Finance \(Fees\)](#) at the appropriate time for details of the fee levels:

Doctoral resubmissions (e.g. PhD, MD, EdD, DClinPsychol, DPaedDent)	£ 490.00
MPhil resubmission	£ 355.00
Mastership by Research resubmission	£ 285.00

Examination of your resubmitted thesis

16. Timescales for examination of a resubmission

Your thesis will be made available to your Examiners normally within 10 working days of submission (if your examination entry workflow has been approved by the Examinations Group).

Examiners are asked to accept a time scale of 3 months (from receiving the thesis) in which to complete the examination (including a second oral examination if required).

17. Examination of the resubmission

The resubmitted thesis is subject to the same process as the first examination³, with both the Internal and External Examiners required to examine the resubmitted thesis. Normally the same team of examiners will act for the resubmission, except in exceptional circumstances.

18. Second oral examination on resubmission

The Examiners may hold a second viva if they deem it appropriate. Your examiners will confirm whether or not a second viva is needed after they have considered your resubmitted thesis. Examiners can not recommend that the resubmission be failed or awarded a lower degree (i.e. award an MPhil on a PhD resubmission) without holding a second viva.

18.1 If a second oral examination is required

The procedure follows the first examination with the internal examiner responsible for making the arrangements. Please refer to the [Guide to the thesis examination process](#) for more detailed advice. An independent chair will be appointed in cases where a second viva is required.

Arrangements have been made for it to be possible for you to complete a research degree viva via video streaming, where appropriate. If you prefer to postpone and rearrange your viva, we will be happy to support this⁴. Please contact your Graduate School.

³ Please refer to the [Guide to the thesis examination process](#) for more detailed advice

⁴ If you are in the UK on a Tier 4 visa please contact the International Student Office for advice,

The viva will normally be scheduled within 3 months of dispatch of the thesis to the Examiners (6 months in the case of MD candidates). PGRs must make all reasonable efforts to attend for the viva in the normal period, for example making appropriate leave arrangements if in employment.

Please note that under University examination regulations, the examiners must not discuss their provisional findings with you at any point before the viva.

If a second oral examination is required the process for informing the PGR follows that for the first examination. This should normally take place after the viva but, in any event, must take place within 24 hours of the oral examination.

18.2 If a second oral examination is not required

If a second oral examination is not required, the internal examiner is asked to take steps to inform you (and your Supervisor(s)) of the recommendation the examiners are sending forward. The internal examiner will also let you know of any editorial and presentational corrections or minor deficiencies which require amendment. You should begin work on these immediately and return your corrected thesis to the examiners within the 4/12 week period - you will not receive these details from DCO.

Outcomes following examination of a resubmitted thesis

19 Possible outcomes after the examination

A second referral is not possible and you will either pass (subject in some cases to the correction of editorial and presentational corrections or minor deficiencies) or fail when the examiners consider the revised submission. You will be given one of the following outcomes. Please refer to the [Guide to the thesis examination process](#) for more detailed advice on each of these and the steps required:

- a) that the degree be awarded (without corrections)
- b) that the degree be awarded subject to editorial and presentational corrections
- c) that the degree be awarded subject to the correction of minor deficiencies
- d) that no research degree be awarded

In the case of PhD resubmissions the following recommendations are also available:

- a) that the degree of MPhil be awarded (without corrections)
- b) that the degree of MPhil be awarded subject to editorial & presentational corrections
- c) that the degree of MPhil be awarded subject to the correction of minor deficiencies

20 Award (without corrections)

An award without corrections means that you have met the learning outcomes, and your resubmitted thesis now satisfies the requirements for award and does not require any alterations. You must now upload a copy of your pdf 'eThesis' format to White Rose Etheses Online within 1 month of your oral examination.

21 Award subject to editorial and presentational corrections

An award subject to editorial and presentational corrections means that you have met the learning outcomes for the programme, and your resubmitted thesis now satisfies the requirements for award but is found to contain minor editorial errors (e.g. trivial errors, typographical errors, simple mistakes of fact or the insertion of headings or other 'signpost' material for the sake of clarity).

Your examiners will advise you of the corrections that are needed to your thesis and you should begin work on these immediately. You will not receive these details from DCO. Your corrections must be completed and returned to your Internal Examiner, normally within 4 weeks. When your internal examiner has approved your corrections you must submit your pdf 'eThesis' within 1 month.

22 Award subject to minor deficiencies

An award subject to minor deficiencies means that you have met the learning outcomes for the programme, and your resubmitted thesis now satisfies the requirements for award but is found to contain deficiencies which are genuinely minor in nature (e.g. rewriting of sections, correcting calculations or clarifying arguments and the correction of minor typographical errors).

Your internal examiner will advise you in writing of the corrections that are needed to your thesis and you should begin work on these immediately. You will not receive these details from DCO. Your corrections must be completed and returned to your Internal Examiner, normally within 12 weeks. When your internal examiner has approved your corrections you must then submit your pdf 'eThesis' within 1 month.

23 Fail

If the examiners' recommend that the thesis be failed there is no further opportunity to revise and submit the work. Examiners cannot make this recommendation without holding a second oral examination. In some circumstances PGRs may appeal against an adverse academic decision. The appeals procedure are available on the [Website](#).

24 MPhil award on a PhD resubmission

For PGRs who have resubmitted for the degree of PhD, it is also possible that the examiners may recommend the award of MPhil (which may be subject to the correction of minor errors or deficiencies) in cases where the candidate fails to achieve the standard for the award of a PhD but nevertheless satisfies the criteria for the award of the degree of MPhil. Examiners cannot make this recommendation without holding a second oral examination. In some circumstances PGRs may appeal against an adverse academic decision. The appeals procedure are available on the [Website](#).

After successful examination of a resubmitted thesis

25 Completing corrections and submitting the final thesis (after successful examination)

After successful examination of a resubmitted thesis you should begin to prepare the final version of your thesis by undertaking any corrections and returning these to your Internal Examiner within the required time period. Once the corrections have been approved by your internal examiner, you must deposit the PDF eThesis.

If the current situation means that you are not going to be able to meet the deadline for completing your corrections you can apply for an extension, and the University will consider all requests sympathetically. Please contact your Graduate School for advice. From March 2020, the University has withdrawn the requirement to submit a hard bound copy of your final, corrected thesis for the award of your degree. You only need to upload a PDF copy of your thesis to White Rose Etheses Online. This can be carried out remotely. You can find advice on how to upload your eThesis on the [Library website](#).

26 Examiners' Report

After the examination has been completed the examiners must prepare their final report on the resubmission. The report is then considered by the Graduate Board's Examinations Group at one of its meetings (as for the first examination). The report and recommendation of your examiners on your resubmitted thesis is subject to approval by the Examinations Group. Please see the [Guide to the thesis examination process](#).

27 Award of your research degree

Your research degree can be awarded once **all** the following conditions have been met:

- Your examiners' report has been approved by the Examinations Group at a [meeting](#);
- DCO has received confirmation that any corrections have been completed.
- You have deposited the full text version of your eThesis in WREO.
- All tuition fees to the University have been paid – including the resubmission fee
- If applicable, all assessed or taught modules have been completed successfully.

Pass Lists are published regularly throughout the year. Once your name has appeared on a pass list you will receive an email (to your University account) confirming that the award of your degree has been made. Further information about the arrangements for graduation and certificates at the current time can be found on the graduation pages of the [SES website](#).

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