

PhD by Publication – Guidance for Admissions Panels

Purpose of the Admissions Process

The PhD by Publication is intended for established researchers at QMUL or affiliated NHS organisations who do not already hold a doctorate and have produced a substantial, coherent body of published research that is equivalent in quality, originality and scope to a traditional PhD thesis.

Unlike candidates registered on a standard PhD programme, candidates on the PhD by Publication route are exempt from annual progression reviews.

As such, the admissions process represents the primary academic quality assurance mechanism for the programme. Admissions panels must therefore satisfy themselves at the point of admission that the candidate already possesses a complete and examinable body of work capable of forming the basis of a doctoral submission.

Admission should not be approved where substantial additional research outputs would be required in order for the candidate ultimately to meet doctoral standards.

The period of registration is intended primarily for:

- preparation of the critical commentary;
- synthesis of the submitted body of work into a doctoral thesis format; and
- completion of examination requirements.

It is not intended as a period for generating the substantive research outputs required for award of the degree.

Please note: This programme is not currently available to candidates who do not hold a contract of employment or honorary contract with QMUL, or an associated NHS organisation.

Key Principles for Admissions Panels

Admissions panels are expected to assess whether:

- the submitted portfolio already demonstrates doctoral-level originality, coherence and contribution to knowledge;
- the quantity and quality of outputs are equivalent to those expected of a standard PhD thesis;

- the outputs collectively form a coherent body of work rather than a collection of unrelated publications;
- the candidate has made a substantial intellectual contribution to the work submitted; and
- the candidate would reasonably be expected to proceed directly to preparation of the critical commentary and thesis assembly following enrolment.

Panels should apply the same academic threshold that would ordinarily be expected of a candidate approaching submission for examination on a standard PhD programme.

Required Admissions Evidence

Applicants must submit:

- A full list of publications proposed for inclusion in the thesis portfolio;
- Copies of all outputs in PDF form
- A statement (**maximum 1,500 words**) explaining how the outputs constitute a significant original contribution to the field;
- Statements of contribution for all co-authored works;
- Formal authorship confirmation where contribution is unclear;
- A current CV; and
- Referee statements as required by the regulations.

Matters Admissions Panels Must Consider

1. Is the Portfolio Already Sufficient for Examination?

The portfolio must already contain a sufficient volume and quality of research to justify doctoral examination. Admissions panels should not admit candidates who would need to undertake substantial additional research or generate significant new publications in order to meet the required standard.

2. Does the Portfolio Form a Coherent Body of Work?

The submitted outputs should demonstrate a clear and coherent programme of research.

3. Are the Publications of Appropriate Academic Quality?

Admissions panels should consider the academic quality and standing of the submitted outputs, including:

- Peer-review status;
- Journal or publisher quality;
- Disciplinary norms and expectations;
- Originality and significance of the research; and
- Evidence of influence or contribution within the field.

Meet the requirements of a Doctoral Degrees as outline in the [QAA guidance](#)

4. Has the Candidate Made a Substantial Intellectual Contribution?

For co-authored outputs, admissions panels must be satisfied that the candidate has made a substantial and clearly identifiable intellectual contribution to the work. First, sole or senior authorship would normally be expected

5. Is the Research Still Current and Relevant?

We ordinarily require that publications span no more than 10 years. If this is not the case the overall body of work must remain relevant, current and influential within the discipline. Admissions panels should consider whether the research continues to demonstrate doctoral-level significance within the field.

Admissions Decisions

Admissions panels should make one of the following recommendations:

- **Approve admission** – where the portfolio is already demonstrably sufficient for doctoral examination.
- **Reject admission** – where the outputs do not currently meet the required threshold and are unlikely to do so in the foreseeable future.
- **Reject - Not yet eligible – reapplication encouraged** – where the panel considers that the candidate demonstrates clear potential for admission in future, but the current portfolio does not yet meet the threshold required for doctoral examination. This may include cases where:
 - additional publications are required;

- the coherence of the research portfolio requires further development; or
- the candidate's independent contribution to the research corpus is not yet sufficiently evidenced.

In such cases, panels may provide developmental feedback and indicate that the candidate would be welcome to reapply at a later stage.

Panels should not offer conditional admissions based upon anticipated future publications or undeveloped research outputs.

Governance

Eligibility for admission must be assessed by:

- The proposed Academic Advisor;
- The Director of Graduate Studies
- A minimum of two academic members of staff with appropriate subject expertise who hold the position of Senior Lecturer, Reader or Professor and have significant experience of doctoral-level examination (a minimum of five previous PhD examinations) – selected by the Director of Graduate Studies and/or Deputy Dean for Postgraduate Research
- With final approval granted by the relevant Faculty Deputy Dean for Postgraduate Research.