

Queen Mary University of London

**Code of Practice for
PhD by Publication**



The PhD by Publication at a Glance

Purpose of this Guide

This Code of Practice sets out the programme-specific arrangements that apply to candidates registered for the Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) by Publication at Queen Mary University of London.

It should be read alongside the University's Academic Regulations for Research Degree Programmes, Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes, and other associated policies. Where this Code is silent, the University's existing regulations, policies and procedures apply.

This document therefore focuses only on those aspects of the PhD by Publication that differ from the University's standard research degree provision.

Programme Overview

The PhD by Publication provides an alternative route to the award of **Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)** for established researchers who have already produced a substantial and coherent body of published research.

Unlike a traditional doctoral programme, candidates are not admitted to undertake a new programme of supervised research. Instead, the period of registration enables candidates to prepare an existing body of published work for doctoral examination through the submission of:

- a portfolio of publications;
- a critical commentary;
- statements of contribution where appropriate; and
- other documentation required by the Academic Regulations.

Successful candidates are awarded the **same Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)** as candidates completing a traditional doctoral programme. The degree certificate does not distinguish between the route by which the award has been achieved.

Key Facts

Feature	Programme-specific arrangements
Award	Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)

Feature	Programme-specific arrangements
Registration	12 months (FT) / 24 months (PT)
Eligibility	QMUL employees, honorary staff and affiliated NHS partner trusts
Academic Support	Academic Adviser (rather than a supervisory team)
Research	Existing published research
Thesis	Portfolio of publications with critical commentary
Progression Reviews	Not required
Examination	Portfolio, commentary and viva voce
Examiners	Two external examiners
Exit Award	No MPhil exit award

Using this Code

The remaining sections explain only those arrangements that are specific to the PhD by Publication.

They do **not** restate procedures already contained within the University's:

- Academic Regulations for Research Degree Programmes;
- Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes;
- Research Degree Examination Guidance; and
- associated University policies.

Where no programme-specific provision is described, candidates and staff should follow the University's standard procedures.

Section 2 – Programme-specific Academic Principles

2.1 Equivalence of Academic Standard

The PhD by Publication leads to the same award of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) as a traditional doctoral programme.

Candidates are examined against the same doctoral standard expected of all PhD candidates at Queen Mary University of London. The route by which the award is obtained does not alter the academic standard required, the level of originality expected, or the requirement to demonstrate a significant contribution to knowledge.

The degree certificate does not distinguish between a PhD obtained through publication and one obtained through a traditional programme of supervised research.

2.2 Existing Published Research

The distinguishing feature of the programme is that it recognises research that has already been completed and disseminated through scholarly publication.

Registration is **not** intended to provide an opportunity to undertake a new programme of doctoral research. Instead, candidates register in order to prepare an existing body of published work for doctoral examination.

The University therefore expects applicants to have developed a coherent body of published research before admission to the programme.

2.3 The Portfolio as a Coherent Body of Research

The PhD by Publication is not awarded on the basis of individual publications considered in isolation.

Candidates must demonstrate that the submitted publications collectively represent a coherent programme of research that:

- addresses a clearly identifiable field or theme;
- demonstrates sustained scholarly development;
- makes an original contribution to knowledge; and
- is equivalent in scope and intellectual depth to a traditional doctoral thesis.

The coherence of the portfolio is a fundamental consideration during both admission and examination.

2.4 The Role of the Critical Commentary

The critical commentary is an essential component of the doctoral submission.

Its purpose is not simply to introduce the publications, but to provide the intellectual framework that enables the examiners to evaluate the portfolio as a single doctoral thesis.

The commentary should explain, where appropriate:

- the development of the candidate's research;
- the relationship between the publications;
- the overall contribution to the discipline;
- methodological and theoretical development; and
- the significance of the body of work as a whole.

The commentary therefore provides the narrative and critical synthesis that distinguishes a doctoral submission from a collection of published papers.

2.6 Independent Examination

Admission to the programme does not imply that the award of the degree will follow.

All candidates are required to demonstrate that their submission satisfies the University's doctoral requirements through independent examination.

The examiners consider the portfolio of publications and critical commentary together before reaching an academic judgement.

The award of the degree rests solely with the appointed examiners and the University's approval processes in accordance with the Academic Regulations.

2.7 Academic Integrity and Authorship

Candidates remain responsible for ensuring that all submitted work complies with the University's requirements relating to:

- research integrity;
- authorship;
- copyright;
- publication ethics; and
- academic conduct.

Where publications have been produced collaboratively, candidates must be able to demonstrate their individual intellectual contribution in accordance with the programme requirements.

2.8 Relationship to the University's Research Degree Framework

Except where this Code specifies otherwise, candidates registered on the PhD by Publication are subject to the same academic expectations, governance arrangements and quality assurance processes as all other postgraduate research students at Queen Mary University of London.

Section 3 – Eligibility and Admission

3.1 Purpose

This section sets out the programme-specific eligibility requirements and admissions arrangements for the PhD by Publication.

3.2 Eligibility

At the point of application, applicants must normally be:

- an employee of Queen Mary University of London;
 - Does not already hold a doctoral degree
 - the holder of an honorary appointment with Queen Mary University of London; or
 - an employee of an NHS partner organisation approved affiliated with the University.
 - Applicants employed on a fixed-term contract must normally hold a contract of employment that extends to at least the end of the standard registration period.
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3.3 Published Research

Applicants must already possess a substantial body of published research that appears suitable for doctoral examination.

The University does not prescribe a minimum number of publications.

Instead, the Admissions Panel will consider whether the proposed portfolio:

- demonstrates a coherent programme of research;

- appears broadly equivalent to the scope and quality of a doctoral thesis;
 - makes an original contribution to knowledge; and
 - is capable of supporting a successful doctoral examination.
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3.4 Co-authored Publications

Collaborative publications may form part of the portfolio.

Where publications have multiple authors, applicants must provide sufficient evidence of their own intellectual contribution to each output.

The Admissions Panel may request further clarification where authorship or contribution is not sufficiently clear.

3.5 Admissions Panel

Applications are considered by an Admissions Panel established by the relevant School or Institute.

In addition to the University's normal admissions requirements, the Panel will consider whether:

- the proposed portfolio appears suitable for doctoral examination;
- the publications form a coherent body of research;
- the applicant's contribution has been satisfactorily demonstrated; and
- an appropriate Academic Adviser has been identified.

Admission confirms only that the application appears suitable to proceed to examination. It does not represent an academic judgement that the degree will ultimately be awarded.

Chapter 4 – Registration

4.1 Registration Period

The standard registration period is:

Mode of Study Registration

Full-time	12 months
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Mode of Study Registration

Part-time 24 months

Registration provides candidates with time to prepare their doctoral submission and complete the examination process.

4.3 Purpose of Registration

Unlike a traditional doctoral programme, registration is not intended to support the completion of new research.

During registration candidates are expected to:

- prepare the critical commentary;
 - finalise the portfolio of publications;
 - prepare the required supporting documentation;
 - work with their Academic Adviser; and
 - prepare for examination.
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4.4 Progression Monitoring

Candidates registered on the PhD by Publication are **not required** to participate in the University's annual progression review process.

This reflects the nature of the programme, which is based upon an existing body of published research rather than a staged programme of supervised research.

Candidates are nevertheless expected to remain actively engaged with the programme throughout their period of registration.

4.5 Changes in Employment

As eligibility for the programme is linked to employment or an approved honorary appointment, candidates must notify the Research Degrees Office if their employment status changes during registration.

The University will determine whether registration may continue in accordance with the Academic Regulations.

4.6 Engagement with the Academic Adviser

Candidates are expected to maintain appropriate engagement with their Academic Adviser throughout registration.

The frequency and format of meetings are outlined the Code of Practice for Research Degrees

Further guidance on the Academic Adviser role is provided in **Chapter 5**.

Chapter 5 – Academic Adviser

5.1 Appointment

An Academic Adviser will normally be identified during the admissions process and confirmed before enrolment.

The Academic Adviser should:

- have expertise relevant to the candidate's field of research;
 - have experience of doctoral supervision and examination; and
 - be familiar with the University's requirements for research degree examinations.
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5.2 Role of the Academic Adviser

The Academic Adviser supports the candidate in preparing their submission for examination.

This normally includes advising on:

- the structure of the critical commentary;
- presentation of the portfolio of publications;
- coherence of the overall submission;
- procedural requirements for submission;
- examiner nominations; and
- preparation for the examination process.

The Academic Adviser provides guidance but is not responsible for determining whether the submission meets the doctoral standard.

5.4 Academic Adviser and Candidate Relationship

The relationship between the Academic Adviser and candidate differs from that of a traditional supervisory relationship.

The Academic Adviser is **not expected to**:

- supervise new research;
- identify publications for inclusion;

Responsibility for the content of the submission remains entirely with the candidate.

5.5 Meetings

The candidate and Academic Adviser should agree an appropriate schedule of meetings at the beginning of registration.

Meetings should be proportionate to the stage of preparation and may take place in person or online.

5.6 Examiner Nominations

The Academic Adviser is responsible for initiating examiner nominations in accordance with the Academic Regulations.

Programme-specific examiner requirements are described in **Chapter 7**.

Chapter 6 – Preparing the Submission

6.2 Components of the Submission

The doctoral submission comprises:

Component	Purpose
Critical Commentary	Provides the intellectual framework for the submission
Portfolio of Publications	The published scholarly outputs submitted for examination
Statement of Contribution	Required for co-authored publications where applicable

These components together constitute a single doctoral thesis.

6.3 Critical Commentary

The critical commentary provides the intellectual synthesis that enables the portfolio to be considered as a coherent doctoral submission.

The maximum word length for the critical commentary is 30,000 words.

Although the precise structure will vary by discipline, the commentary would normally:

- explain the development of the candidate's research;
- demonstrate the coherence of the portfolio;
- identify the contribution to knowledge;
- discuss methodological and theoretical development; and
- critically reflect upon the published work.

The commentary is not intended simply to summarise the publications.

6.4 Portfolio of Publications

The portfolio should comprise the publications approved through the admissions process together with any subsequent amendments approved by the University.

The portfolio should represent a coherent programme of research rather than a collection of unrelated outputs.

6.5 Co-authored Publications

Where publications have multiple authors, candidates must provide a statement describing their individual contribution to each publication.

The statement should enable the examiners to determine the extent of the candidate's intellectual contribution to the submitted work.

6.6 Copyright

Candidates are responsible for ensuring that inclusion of published material complies with copyright legislation and publisher licensing requirements.

Where permission is required to reproduce published material, candidates must obtain that permission before submission.

6.7 Submission Checklist

Before submission candidates should confirm that:

- the portfolio is complete;
- the critical commentary has been finalised;
- statements of contribution have been included where required;
- copyright requirements have been met; and
- examiner nominations have been approved.

Detailed submission procedures are contained within the University's Research Degree Examination Guidance.

Chapter 7 – Examination

7.2 Examination

The doctoral submission is examined as an integrated body of work comprising:

- the portfolio of publications;
 - the critical commentary; and
 - the viva voce examination.
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7.3 Examiners

Unlike a traditional PhD, the PhD by Publication will normally be examined by **two external examiners**.

7.4 Examination Criteria

The examiners will determine whether the submission demonstrates:

- originality;
- a significant contribution to knowledge;
- intellectual coherence across the submitted publications;
- doctoral-level scholarship; and
- that the candidate's contribution justifies the award of the degree.

The publications and critical commentary will be considered together when reaching an academic judgement.

7.5 Examination Outcomes

The available outcomes are:

Outcome	Description
Pass	Doctor of Philosophy awarded
Pass subject to minor corrections	Minor amendments required before award
Fail	Degree not awarded

There is **no MPhil exit award** for the PhD by Publication.

7.6 Corrections

Where minor corrections for the critical commentary are required, candidates must complete them within the timescale specified by the University.

The approval of corrections will be undertaken in accordance with the University's standard examination procedures.

7.7 Award

Following approval of the examiners' recommendation, successful candidates will be awarded the degree of **Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)**.
