

PhD by Publication – Programme Overview & Guidance

1. Introduction

The **PhD by Publication** provides a doctoral route for experienced researchers who have already produced a substantial body of published work that demonstrates:

- Originality
- Independent critical scholarship
- A significant contribution to knowledge

The award recognises that significant research contributions may be produced through **professional, clinical, technical, or practice-based contexts** outside traditional doctoral pathways.

The quality and scale of the submitted work must be **equivalent to that required for a traditional PhD thesis** examined under standard doctoral regulations.

This handbook outlines the **full lifecycle of the programme**, including:

- eligibility and admissions
- portfolio requirements
- authorship verification
- supervision arrangements
- progression and submission
- examination procedures.

2. Programme Overview

Programme Structure

The PhD by Publication consists of:

1. **A portfolio of published research outputs**
2. **A critical commentary (maximum 30,000 words)**
3. **A viva voce examination**

Candidates are supported by a **QMUL academic adviser**, equivalent to the supervisory role in a traditional PhD.

Duration

Mode	Duration
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Full-time	12 months
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Part-time	24 months
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Minimum registration periods:

Mode	Minimum
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Full-time	6 months
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Part-time	12 months
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Entry Points

The programme has **three entry points per year**:

- September
 - January
 - April
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3. Eligibility

Applicants must meet **standard QMUL PhD entry requirements**, and additionally must:

- Be **current QMUL staff**, or hold an **honorary contract with QMUL**, OR
- Be an **employee of Barts Health NHS Trust or another NHS trust serving QMUL's local population**.

Contracts must normally extend for **the duration of the programme**.

The programme is **not currently open to external applicants**.

4. Nature of the PhD by Publication

The degree recognises **a coherent body of published research** that demonstrates:

- a sustained research programme
- intellectual coherence

- original contribution to knowledge.

The portfolio must demonstrate work **equivalent to the standard expected for a PhD thesis**.

The submission must not consist of **unconnected publications**.

5. Admissions Process

Application Submission

Applications are submitted via the **QMUL admissions portal**.

Applicants must submit:

- List of publications forming the portfolio
 - Hyperlinks to each output
 - Summary statement (max **1,500 words**) explaining how the publications form a coherent body of research
 - Statement of authorship contribution for co-authored publications
 - Current CV
 - Three academic references
 - Identification of a **QMUL academic adviser**.
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Admissions Panel

Applications are assessed by an **Admissions Panel** comprising:

- Director of Graduate Studies (Chair)
- Two academic staff members with expertise in the field.

The panel assesses:

- Quality of the publications
- Peer-review status
- Journal or publication quality
- Candidate contribution
- Intellectual coherence of the research corpus.

The DGS makes a recommendation for admission which must be approved by the **Faculty Deputy Dean for Postgraduate Research**.

6. Publication Portfolio Requirements

Number of Publications

There is **no fixed number of publications required**.

However, the portfolio must demonstrate a body of work **equivalent to that expected in a PhD thesis**.

Admissions panels and examiners should consider:

- disciplinary norms
 - research scale
 - intellectual contribution.
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Type of Outputs

Most outputs should normally be:

- **peer-reviewed**
- published in **indexed academic journals**.

Other scholarly outputs may exceptionally be considered, including:

- monographs
- policy documents
- other scholarly outputs where appropriate.

All outputs must be **publicly accessible scholarly work**.

7. Publication Age (10-Year Rule)

Ordinarily, publications included in the portfolio should have been **accepted for publication within 10 years of enrolment**.

However, older work may be considered where the candidate can demonstrate that:

- the outputs remain **current and influential**
- the work forms a **coherent programme of research**

- the candidate has **remained active in the field**
- the work represents a **substantial and original contribution to knowledge**.

Approval of exceptions must be granted by the **relevant Research Degrees Committee (or delegated authority)**.

8. Authorship and Contribution

The PhD by Publication recognises **the candidate's independent intellectual contribution**.

Candidates must normally be:

- **sole author**
- **first author**
- **last author**

for the majority of outputs.

Contribution Statement

For every publication included in the portfolio, candidates must provide:

- a **written statement describing their contribution**.

Acceptable contributions may include:

- conceptualisation
 - research design
 - data collection
 - data analysis
 - drafting manuscripts
 - substantive intellectual revisions.
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Verification of Contribution

Where contributions are not clearly stated in the publication:

Candidates must obtain **written confirmation from the corresponding author or senior co-author** confirming the accuracy of their contribution statement.

The University may request further clarification where authorship contribution is unclear.

9. Academic Adviser (Supervisor)

Each candidate is assigned a **QMUL academic adviser**.

The adviser must be:

- a senior academic staff member
 - an experienced PhD supervisor.
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Role of the Academic Adviser

The adviser is responsible for:

- advising on the coherence of the portfolio
- supporting development of the **critical commentary**
- advising on submission readiness
- nominating examiners.

The adviser **does not supervise new research**.

10. Registration and Progression

Candidates on the PhD by Publication:

- **are exempt from annual progression reviews.**

However candidates must:

- maintain regular contact with their adviser
 - complete **mandatory doctoral training**, including research integrity.
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11. Thesis Submission

The PhD by Publication thesis must include the following sections:

1. Title page
2. Contents page

3. Statement of originality
 4. Abstract (maximum **300 words**)
 5. Critical commentary (maximum **30,000 words**)
 6. Statement of contribution to each publication
 7. Copyright statement
 8. Copies of the publications.
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12. Critical Commentary

The critical commentary is the **central integrative component of the thesis**.

It must:

- explain the intellectual context of the research
- analyse the unifying themes across publications
- demonstrate methodological rigour
- articulate the candidate's contribution to knowledge
- explain the impact of the work.

The commentary must demonstrate that the **portfolio constitutes a coherent research programme**.

13. Copyright and Permissions

Candidates must ensure that:

- copyright permissions are obtained where necessary
 - third-party copyright is not infringed
 - publications can legally be included in the thesis deposited in the QMUL repository.
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14. Examination

Examiners

Two **external examiners** will be appointed.

Internal examiners are **not permitted**.

Viva Voce

Candidates must undertake a **viva voce examination**.

The viva will assess:

- the coherence of the portfolio
- the candidate's intellectual contribution
- the critical commentary
- the significance of the research.

15. Examination Outcomes

Possible outcomes are:

1. Pass
2. Pass with minor corrections to the critical commentary
3. Fail.

If the degree is not awarded, examiners must indicate whether:

- the **quality** of work is insufficient
- the **volume** of work is insufficient.

Re-application

Candidates who fail may reapply to the programme **after two years**.

They may include publications previously submitted.

16. Fees

The programme fee is:

£6,000 (flat fee).

17. Programme Governance

Oversight of the programme is provided by:

- Faculty Deputy Deans for Postgraduate Research
- Directors of Graduate Studies
- Research Degrees Office
- Research Degrees Programmes and Examinations Board (RDPEB).

The programme operates under:

- QMUL Academic Regulations
 - PGR Code of Practice.
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18. Responsibilities

Candidate

- Compile the publication portfolio
 - Prepare the critical commentary
 - Provide authorship evidence
 - Prepare for examination.
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Academic Adviser

- Guide preparation of the commentary
 - Advise on portfolio coherence
 - Support preparation for viva
 - Nominate examiners.
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Director of Graduate Studies

- Convene admissions panel
 - Ensure academic standards
 - Recommend admission decisions.
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Research Degrees Office

- administer registration

- coordinate examination
- ensure regulatory compliance.