RESEARCH DEGREES: PROCEDURE FOR THE SUBMISSION OF THESES FOR EXAMINATION (PHD, PhDFA, PhDPW, DPROF, DAG, MPHIL, LLM (RSEARCH)

The following notes will guide you when completing the form necessary for submission of your thesis for examination by Aberystwyth University. A checklist has been included to assist you with ensuring you have completed all the necessary steps prior to submitting your work.

Included in these notes is the **mandatory layout for the declaration and statements page** which must be included with your thesis along with the Abstract. The content of this page should be reproduced as is, then completed, signed and included within the electronic thesis.

Following the guidance carefully and fully will allow the University to examine your thesis in a timely manner.

CHECKLIST FOR CANDIDATES

- Student has completed an intention to submit form and submitted it to their department 3 months prior to expected submission of the thesis.
- Contact grastaff@aber.ac.uk to be added to the Blackboard thesis submission link.
- One electronic version of the thesis in PDF or Word format. After the title page the Mandatory Statement and Declaration form should be completed and signed. The thesis should also include the Abstract after the Declaration.
- Other forms to be uploaded with the thesis on Blackboard:
- One completed Electronic Thesis Declaration Form

PLEASE NOTE THAT IF ANY OF THE ABOVE ARE OMITTED THERE WILL BE A DELAY IN THE EXAMINATION OF YOUR THESIS

NOTES OF GUIDANCE FOR CANDIDATES

Time Limits for the submission of Theses
Submission of your work must take place on, or before, the deadline recorded in your student record.

Length of Thesis
The text of the PhD thesis is a maximum of 100,000 words (excluding appendices and references).

The text of the MPhil/LLM (Res) or Dag/DProf thesis is a maximum of 60,000 words (excluding appendices and references.

Special provisions relating to Schemes in the Creative Arts.

In the case of candidates following approved research degree schemes which fall within the University's subject area of Creative and Performing Arts, the thesis may take one or more of the following forms: artefacts, score, portfolio of original works, performance or exhibition. The

submission shall be accompanied by a written commentary placing it in its academic context together with any other items which may be required (e.g., a catalogue or audio or visual recording). These submissions can now be submitted via SharePoint which can support MP4 files. Please email grastaff@aber.ac.uk for more information.

Abstract
A copy of the Abstract will be published in the University's online research repository, even if the thesis is not made available. A form is provided at the end of this booklet for you to complete.

Thesis abstract: guidance for research students

An abstract is a self-contained summary of 250-300 words of your thesis. This will appear at the front of the thesis and give your examiners a succinct introduction to the thesis. Very significantly, once you have passed, it will be displayed on online research repositories to inform potential readers of the thesis of its contents.

It will contain key terms that may be picked out in searches. So, it is important in enabling readers to find your work and helping them to decide whether it is relevant to their own research. Conference papers, research grants and journal publications will all require an abstract and so it is useful to develop the ability to produce these informative summaries.

The abstract will be written once the thesis has been finalised so that it can cover the whole work. It may take different forms dependent on discipline (check works in your own discipline area for guidance) but usually it will cover:

- Project rationale

- Research question(s)

- Method(s)

- Main findings / conclusions

- Implications of the findings (e.g., for future research, practical applications)

It is well worth taking some time to produce a well-written abstract, especially when you come to the final submission for deposit, to attract as much attention as possible to your thesis.

An abstract should be produced for all types of research degree submission, including creative practice-based works. Even if the thesis is embargoed for a period, the abstract will be published, so that anyone interested can request individual access or make a note to check the thesis when it is released.

Documents to be Submitted with your thesis.

Included in these Guidance notes you will find a page titled 'Mandatory Layout of Declarations and Statements'. The FULL content of these pages should be inserted at the front of the electronic copy of your thesis without change to the wording or content of the Declaration or Statements.

Each Declaration and Statement must be signed and dated.

This form also includes the word count of your thesis, which must be completed.

Presentation of Theses

Candidates submitting a thesis for examination shall submit one electronic copy to the BB thesis submission link.

Candidate's name;

University's name (can be abbreviated to AU);

Degree for which the thesis is being submitted;

The full or abbreviated name of the thesis; and

The date of submission.

This information shall be visible on the front page.

If the work consists of more than one volume, the front page shall also bear the number of each volume.

The electronic copy of the thesis, whether for the purpose of examination or for deposit in libraries, shall be presented in permanent and legible form and the characters employed in the main text (but not necessarily in illustrations, maps etc.) shall be not less than 12pt; characters employed in all other texts, notes, footnotes, etc. shall be not less than 10pt. Typing shall be of even quality with clear black characters.

Double or one-and-a–half spacing shall be used in the main text, but single spacing shall be used in the abstract and in any indented quotations and footnotes. Drawings and sketches shall be in black ink, unnecessary details should be omitted and the scale should be such that the minimum space between lines is not less than 1mm. All pages should be appropriately numbered.

Candidates may submit other supporting materials where they form a useful addition to, or explanation of, work contained in the written submission and if such material constitutes the most appropriate method of presenting the information concerned. Ideally this will be in digital form but if this is not possible, students should consult their supervisors and Information Services staff for advice at an early stage of their research.

Please contact grastaff@aber.ac.uk for more information regarding submissions using MP4 files.

Guidelines for mandatory submission of electronic versions of theses:

Theses are submitted electronically via Blackboard for the purpose of examination and final deposit in the University's online research repository. This also enables checking by software that can indicate whether the work might not be the student's own.

Format of Electronic Submission:

The electronic version of the PRE viva thesis should be uploaded to the BB submission link. Acceptable formats include any University recognised electronic format .doc, .docx, .odt, .txt, .rtf, .pdf, .html).

The file name of the thesis should appear as "pre_viva_thesis_title_student_name_submission_date" (to a maximum of 255 characters, abbreviations may be required).

The body of the thesis should be in one file. The file must not exceed 100 MB. If the file exceeds this size, please create a separate file for images or compress the file.

Additionally, all successful candidates must submit an electronic copy of the **final version** of the thesis to the BB submission link. The final electronic version should be clearly labelled and the file name to include: "post_viva_final_thesis_title_student_name_date" (to a maximum of 255 characters; abbreviations may be required). An electronic version is required for harvesting of meta-data even in instances where the work is not placed in the online research repository.

Dispatch of thesis

Once you have submitted all the required documents and pre viva thesis to BB, Graduate School will organize the dispatch to the examiners, together with the relevant Regulations and procedural guidance.

Neither students nor Academic Departments/Institutes are to send theses directly to examiners.

The Examination Process

Amendments to submitted theses prior to viva:

Candidates may not amend, add, or delete from the thesis after it has been submitted for examination. Submitted theses may not be returned to candidates for improvement prior to the completion of the Examining Board's deliberations and formal recommendation. A work which cannot be passed as submitted, should be re-submitted formally in modified form for re-examination.

Examiners are requested to notify the Graduate School immediately if they receive draft theses for 'comment and return' prior to the commencement of the formal examining process. They should decline firmly any suggestion that a thesis should be returned to a candidate for improvement and re-consideration prior to completion of the Examining Board's formal deliberations.

Oral Examination (First Submission)

An oral examination ('viva voce') is compulsory and you should be available to be examined in this way. Oral examinations will normally be held at the University. If, following the viva, the Examining Board confirmed that you were required to make either Minor Corrections (4 weeks) or Corrections and amendments (6 months or 3 months depending on the degree) to your thesis and have these approved by your examiners before the degree can be awarded. You must meet these corrections deadlines.

Departments/Faculties must report to Graduate School any student that has not completed the corrections within the required timeframe.

Extensions to the corrections deadline will only be approved in exceptional circumstances and when a formal application with supporting evidence has been made to the Graduate School.

Oral Examination (Re-examinations)

In the event of a re-examination, a further oral examination will normally be required. If so, you must be available to attend such an examination which normally will be held at the University.

The viva may only be waived in the instance of a clear pass or other exceptional circumstances. The normal expectation is that the viva must be held in order to allow the student an opportunity to defend their work. A resubmission is treated like a first submission and all documents must be submitted again including the intention to submit form.

The thesis after the viva

It is the responsibility of the Chair to inform the student of the scope and deadline for completion of the required corrections. Where the candidate has passed, but the work requires minor corrections, amendments or typographical corrections, the Chair should arrange with the candidate for the necessary corrections to be made.

The Chair should send the completed Report and Result form and the Interim Report Form to the Graduate School. The forms must be completed, to include the individual examiners reports, a joint report and must be signed by the examiners, the student and the chair where required.

Candidates' results must not be released until any minor or typographical corrections required have been carried out and the final approved version of the thesis has been received and checked.

It is the responsibility of candidates to make the required corrections within the specified time. Chairs should check that these tasks have been performed satisfactorily and in a timely fashion to avoid delays in awarding degrees.

Any notes or marginal comments made by examiners in theses must be erased prior to their deposit in Libraries.

The final version thesis will be sent to the AU Repository by the Graduate School along with the electronic Thesis Declaration Form.

Theses so deposited will be made available by the University to external repositories and search tools including the digital collection of the National Library of Wales and the British Library's UK database of theses.

The candidate will be expected to sign a declaration that they have obtained the appropriate copyright permission for the inclusion of any third-party content within the thesis so that the work can legally be made available in an open access repository.

Material accepted for the institutional repository should conform to guidelines issued from time to time by Information Services.

When a thesis is subject to a bar on access, it will not be deposited in the open access electronic repository until the expiry of that bar.

Unsuccessful submissions should be returned to the candidate after completion of the examination process.

Bars on Access

The University expects that research work accepted for a higher degree shall be openly available, and subject to no security classification or restriction of access.

Nevertheless, in cases where there is an overriding need for a restriction of copying or access (for example where sponsored research has resulted in a thesis which contains commercially-sensitive information) the University may, on the special recommendation of a Department, place a bar on photocopying of and/or access to a thesis for a specified period (normally three years in the first instance). It is the responsibility of your supervisor to make an application to the Department for a bar to be sought as soon as is reasonably practicable. Ideally the Department will be able to forward a recommendation that a bar be applied to the University at the outset of your candidature.

Please note that, in the event that a bar on photocopying and/or access is granted by the University, the signed statement to be included with each copy of the thesis submitted should indicate that the thesis may be made openly available after the expiry of the bar on access.

Normally, the title and summary of the thesis will be made available.