



# **Guidance Notes for PhD and MD (by Published Work) Degrees**

**2021/22**

Student Regulations and Policies

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## Guidance Notes for PhD and MD (by Published Work) Degrees

### What is a PhD or MD (by Published Work)?

These awards provide researchers who have already published but not obtained a doctoral award an alternative route to the traditional PhD or MD. It allows them to demonstrate through the medium of their publications that they have already undertaken doctoral level research and have the appropriate research skills for that level. The MD is aimed at researchers in a clinical environment who have made a significant contribution to medical knowledge and/or professional practice.

### Criteria for the Awards

The University's Academic Regulations state:

"The PhD (by Published Work) is awarded to a candidate who, having critically investigated and evaluated an approved topic resulting in an independent, significant and original contribution to knowledge and demonstrated an understanding of research methods appropriate to the chosen field, has presented a synoptic commentary and defended the Published Work by oral examination, to the satisfaction of the examiners."

"The MD (by Published Work) is awarded to a student, who having critically investigated and evaluated diagnosis or management in a clinical environment resulting in a significant contribution to medical knowledge and/or professional practice, has presented a synoptic commentary and defended the Published Work, by oral examination, to the satisfaction of the examiners."

### How is an award by Published Work assessed?

An award by Published Work is assessed on the candidate's own publications, (not necessarily all of them, more often a selection of them), supported by an overarching synoptic commentary and an oral examination.

Together, the published works and the synoptic commentary (recommended word count approximately 10,000 words) will be very roughly equivalent to a doctoral level thesis and as with a traditional PhD or MD must demonstrate that the candidate's research skills are commensurate with doctoral level and that the research work, including methodology, is of doctoral level.

### How many publications are needed for an award?

There is no numerical answer to the question - it is a matter of how many of the candidate's publications together show that the work achieved has had an impact on other knowledge in the field; that the candidate understands the impact, can justify and defend it against peer critique, and that they are capable of continuing to make a contribution to knowledge in an independent and original way.

The publications may be a selection of the candidate's work rather than all the works published but together they will focus on a particular research topic. The publications selected should be peer-reviewed. The works must be already in the public domain not awaiting publication. The candidate's contribution will need to be clearly detailed for any publications with joint authorship.

### Is there a time restriction on publications?

The answer is no for the same reasons given above - the publications selected must demonstrate an original contribution to knowledge. How long the contribution to knowledge remains current will depend on the field.

### What kinds of publication are permitted?

Usually, the publications will be peer-reviewed; they can be journal articles, books or other forms of printed material. However, the University permits submission of other materials outside conventional publications thereby allowing areas such as art and design to seek an award by the Published Work route. These need to be accessible for peer review purposes to be considered as 'published'. Whatever the form of the work, it must be listed in the publications when applying for admission.

### Entry Requirements

As with most UK Higher Education institutions offering this award, entry is not open to all. All applicants must hold a Bachelor degree with honours from a UK University or equivalent (or Bachelor of Surgery or equivalent awarded

by a UK medical school or equivalent for the MD) **and**

**PhD (by Published Work):**

- (i) be a current member of the staff of the University or one of the partner institutions of the University; **or**
- (ii) be an honorary academic of the University; **or**
- (iii) be a graduate of the University; **or**
- (iv) an external applicant who can demonstrate a record of publications of an appropriate quantity and quality to benefit from this form of doctoral study.

**MD (by Published Work):**

- (i) have for at least 5 years prior to the entry for the degree, held a research or teaching appointment; or
  - (ii) have been engaged in the practice of medicine or surgery;
- and
- (iii) have been registered with the General Medical Council of the United Kingdom.

**Tuition Fees**

Tuition fees are published on the University's website: <http://www.uclan.ac.uk/research/study/cost.php>

**How to apply**

The documentation for Stage 1 should be submitted either:

- by email to [researchadmissions@uclan.ac.uk](mailto:researchadmissions@uclan.ac.uk), or
- by post to the Senior Research Degrees Administrator (Admissions), Research Student Registry (RSR), UCLan

**Stage 1: Initial Application**

The applicant must complete the online application form; this is available on the University's web site. With this the applicant must provide the following:

- a list of the publications and copies of those published works (electronic copies or links to the publication online are acceptable);
- details of the applicant's contribution to each publication where there is joint authorship (the candidate will need to obtain statements from fellow authors to confirm the position at a later stage if accepted);
- the topic (provisional title) to be embodied in the synoptic commentary;
- a covering statement detailing what the topic is and how the works demonstrate a doctoral standard has been attained. (Applicants are advised to pay particular attention to the award criteria.);
- a statement from applicant that the Works have not been submitted in whole or in part for any other award either in published or unpublished form;
- a CV

All the required information must be submitted before an application can be considered.

**Stage 2: School Review and Support**

- Step 1 The RSR will send the application and supporting information to the Research Degrees Tutor and Head/Dean of the relevant school with a referee nomination (referees will be nominated by the RSR from the central pool and will have experience of Published Worksawards)
- Step 2 The school will ensure they are in a position to provide supervision.
- Step 3 If supervision is available and preliminary consideration indicates the application may have validity, the school may request the appointment of a further referee with more subject specific expertise.
- Step 4 Following agreement by the school that supervision is available, the Research Degrees Tutor and the referee(s) will consider the application and supporting documents.

For all applications the Research Degrees Tutor and referees will be required to produce individual assurance reports. The Research Degrees Tutor and the referee(s) will decide whether to reject the application or to proceed to interview. All Interview Panels will include the Research Degrees Tutor and referee(s). The assurance reports should clearly demonstrate support for the decision to accept or reject the application. If the school wishes to support the application then the reports should provide assurance that the published work is (or is highly likely to be) sufficient to support a doctoral level award.

Applicants who are not successful may use the Complaints procedure in the Admissions and Applicants Complaints procedure policy which can be found at:  
[https://www.uclan.ac.uk/study\\_here/student-contract-research-students.php](https://www.uclan.ac.uk/study_here/student-contract-research-students.php)

### **Stage 3: Research Degree Board Approval to Proceed to Examination**

If the School supports the application then the Research Degrees Board must approve the candidature of the applicant for the award of PhD or MD (by Published Work). The following will be required for the Board:

- the assurance reports demonstrating how the published work will meet the requirements of the award;
- the proposed topic title;
- copies of the published work;
- a statement from the candidate on the extent of the candidate's contribution where the work includes joint authorship or other types of collaboration. The written statement(s) signed by any joint author confirming the extent of the candidate's contribution to the work.

Following approval by Research Degrees Board, confirmation of candidacy for the award of PhD or MD (by Published Work) will be sent to the applicant by the Admissions Office.

The expected time for drawing up the synoptic commentary is 12 months although a further 12 months may be permitted. The candidate can only proceed to examination once the synoptic commentary has been drawn up and examination arrangements approved by the Research Degrees Board. (See section on Submission).

### **Enrolment and Induction**

The student will enrol and pay fees at the next entry point. The student will also be required to attend one of the University's compulsory Induction events. Details will be provided with the enrolment information.

### **Supervision**

The School will appoint at least one supervisor who should be "experienced" ie have successfully supervised one previous PhD or MD student to completion. If the proposed supervisor does not have this completion, an additional supervisor will be required.

### **Progression Monitoring**

All students studying for a PhD or MD (by Published Work) are required to complete the Annual Progression Monitoring exercise to ensure they are progressing satisfactorily. In the case of an unsatisfactory annual progression report, students may be asked to provide an interim progress report of approximately 1,500 words detailing work completed and intended further work.

### **The Synoptic Commentary**

The recommended length of the Synoptic Commentary is 10,000 words. Further guidance on the format is contained in the 'Thesis and Examinations Guide' section of the Research Student Assessment Handbook..

The Synoptic Commentary will differ from a traditional doctoral thesis in terms of its content. It should take the form of a critical appraisal and should demonstrate that the published work makes an independent, significant and original contribution to knowledge to the nominated topic by the candidate.

### **Submission**

Students are expected to complete their PhD or MD (by Published Work) within 12 months of the start date. Continuation beyond this time is subject to approval and will be subject to a maximum additional period of one year. Students who do not submit within these timescales will be recorded as failing for the registered award.

A candidate for PhD or MD (by Published Work) will be required to submit:

- (i) A copy of the selection of published material for each of the examiners. These published works may take the form of books, contributions to journals, chapters in edited journals, (peer-reviewed conference papers and other reports may also be submitted);
- (ii) A Synoptic Commentary of approximately 10,000 words;
- (iii) A complete list of all publications by the candidate;
- (iv) A declaration that the submitted published work, either in whole or in part, has not been submitted either in published or unpublished form for another award;
- (v) Where the work submitted includes work conducted in collaboration with others, a student will need to provide a written statement signed by all collaborating parties indicating the extent of the candidate's contribution to the work.
- (vi) The submission will only be eligible for examination when all the elements required have been lodged with the Academic Registry.

### **Examination**

Examination for this award has two parts:

*Part 1* is the submission and preliminary assessment of the Published Works and the Synoptic Commentary.

*Part 2* is the defence by oral examination.

Examiners are proposed by the School and must meet the same criteria as examiners for other doctoral awards. The criteria can be found in the Academic Regulations.

The Published Works supported by the overarching Synoptic Commentary should demonstrate that the candidate has attained a doctoral level of research and skills and meets the criteria for the award as defined in Academic Regulation A1.1.6.