



Cardiff
Metropolitan
University

Prifysgol
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Caerdydd

Professional Doctorate

NOTES FOR
**EXAMINERS
& CHAIRS**



Notes for External and Internal Examiners and for Convenors and Chairs of Research Examination Boards of all Professional Doctorate Awards

The following 'Notes...' should be read in conjunction with the Cardiff Metropolitan University's Professional Doctorate Handbook and Regulations, Research Degrees Regulations, and Code of Practice for Research Degrees.

1. Examination Arrangements:

The Chair of the Exam Board shall be responsible for ensuring that the correct administrative procedures for the examination of the Final Project Report and Reflective Essay are carried out (Please see the note to paragraph 5.4, below.)

1.1 Time-table for the examination:

External Examiners are asked to report upon the work as soon as possible; and not less than two working weeks before the date of the oral (Viva Voce) examination. If this proves to be impossible, examiners are asked to notify the Chair of the Board as soon as possible. Cardiff Metropolitan University is keen to ensure that candidates do not face lengthy delays during the examination process.

2. Duties of the Examiners of Professional Doctorate Oral Examinations

Examiners are required to conduct an oral examination of candidates who have submitted their Final Project Report and Reflective Essay for one of the following Professional Doctorate Degree Pathways: DBA, DEng, DProf, DSBE, or EdD. Where an examination of a re-submitted report is being conducted, the requirement for a second Viva Voce may be waived, at the discretion of the Examination Board.

During the examination process, the Examiners shall:

- consider the assessments submitted by the candidate for the final module of the Professional Doctorate, DOC8004 Final Project Report and Personal Reflections. These assessments include the Final Project Report (approx. 20,000 words) and Reflective Essay (approx. 5,000 words);
- report on the scope, character and quality of the work submitted (see



Section 4 and 5 for more detail on the required report).

During the examination process, the Examiners are advised **not to** revisit the outcomes of the assessments conducted by the candidate on the first three modules of the relevant Professional Doctorate Award. These will include those conducted on:

- DOC7001 Proposing Change: Context and Change
- DOC8002 Literature Review and Rationale for Change
- DOC8003 Proposed Project Design and Pilot

All the assessments on these modules would have been assessed previously and dealt with during a University Taught Exam Board. Consequently, these assessments cannot inform the outcome of the candidate's Viva Voce Examination.

3. Presentation of a Thesis

The candidate may decide to present a 'Thesis' for the Exam Board that covers all of the work conducted during the Professional Doctorate, giving the exam board a flavour for the candidate's journey. This is not compulsory, but if the candidate does decide to provide this information, then it should be in the following structure:

- | | |
|-----------|---|
| Chapter 1 | Brief overview of thesis |
| Chapter 2 | DOC7001 Proposing Change: Context and Change |
| Chapter 3 | DOC8002 Literature Review and Rationale for Change |
| Chapter 4 | DOC8003 Proposed Project Design and Pilot |
| Chapter 5 | DOC8004 Final Project Report and Personal Reflections |

As alluded to in Section 2, above, it is only Chapter 5 (i.e., DOC8004 Final Project Report and Personal Reflections) that is being examined in the Viva Voce Examination.

4. Pre-Exam Board: The written reports

- 4.1 Prior to the oral examination, Examiners are required to assess the Final Project Report and Personal Reflections individually and independently (without reference to the other examiner, the candidate or the supervisors) and prepare an assessment report which is submitted to Cardiff Metropolitan University's Academic Registry.



4.2 The assessment report should be at least 300 words long, and it should report on the scope, character and quality of the work submitted through:

- outlining the strengths and weaknesses of the Final Project Report and Personal Reflections in relation to their achievement of the Professional Doctorate criteria, as outlined in Section 5;
- identifying any issues on which the examiner would like to seek clarification in the *viva voce* examination (which should normally be held approximately six working weeks after receipt of the thesis).

In formulating the assessment report, examiners should bear in mind that under Cardiff Metropolitan University's regulations a candidate may not see examiners' reports prior to the oral examination, but may do so afterwards.

4.3 An examiner must not communicate directly with the other Examiner prior to both examiners' independent reports being submitted to Cardiff Metropolitan University's Academic Registry.

4.4 If an examiner has a concern about the thesis before the submission of the independent reports it should be discussed only with the Chair of the Examining Board. Such concerns could be linked to unfair practice or the quality of the submission.

5. Criteria for the Award of a Professional Doctorate

When evaluating the scope, character and quality of the work submitted, the Examiners are asked to consider the following module criteria for DOC8004 Final Project Report and Personal Reflections:

- i. Demonstrate a systematic acquisition and understanding of a body of knowledge at the forefront of the academic discipline relevant to the professional practice proposed to be undertaken within the organisational and/or professional context;
- ii. Conceptualise, design and implement an applied project for the generation of new knowledge relevant to professional practice within the organisational and/or professional context;
- iii. Interpret the new knowledge relevant to professional practice developed from the project in relation to previous research and the organisational



and/or professional context ;

- iv. Reflect critically in relation to the work completed throughout the project, focusing specifically on how ethical, political, and/or moral issues encountered during the whole programme of study have informed their professional practice;
- v. Analyse and evidence how reflections relevant to the programme of study across the Professional Doctorate have developed and influenced their professional practice;
- vi. Conclude the Professional Doctorate by reflecting on the work done and how it could be advanced post-Professional Doctorate.

6. The Oral Examination

- 6.1 The oral examination will normally be conducted at Cardiff Metropolitan University.
- 6.2 The following must be present at the oral examination:
 - The Candidate;
 - The Chair;
 - The External Examiner
 - The Internal Examiner. *Where members of staff are submitting for a degree, the Examination Board shall consist of two External Examiners, in addition to the Chair and the Candidate.*
- 6.3 In the case of a candidate resident at the time of submission elsewhere than in the UK, the oral examination may be deferred until the candidate returns to the UK, in line with the requirements for the deferral of examination stipulated in the Regulations for the Degree of Professional Doctorate. The examination may not be deferred for a period in excess of twelve months from the date of submission of the Final Project Report and Personal Reflections.
- 6.4 When the Examination Board convenes there will be a preliminary meeting at which the structure of the questioning should be agreed. The preliminary meeting will confirm the initial opinion of the internal and/or external examiners and will decide on the main points to be raised during the oral examination, to include any issues previously raised in writing by members of the supervision team.



- 6.5 At the oral examination, care should be taken to ensure that the candidate is encouraged to feel at ease so that s/he can display her/his knowledge and abilities to best effect. At the start of the examination, the Chair should ensure that the candidate is introduced to the Examiners and that the purpose of the Viva Voce Examination is articulated.
- 6.6 The purpose of the oral examination is three-fold:
- to enable the examiners to assure themselves that the Final Project Report and Personal Reflections are the candidate's own work;
 - to give the candidate the opportunity to defend the Final Project Report and Personal Reflections and to clarify any obscurities in them;
 - to enable the examiners to assess the candidate's general knowledge in his or her particular field of learning.
- 6.7 A candidate's Director of Studies has the right to convey to the Chair of the Examining Board any contextual information that might have affected the progress of the candidate's Final Project Report and Personal Reflections or preparation for their examination, which the Board should take into account prior to reaching its decision. The Director of Studies should convey these concerns, in writing, both to the Chair and to the candidate as soon as practicable after the presentation of the Final Project Report and Personal Reflections.
- 6.8 The oral examination could cover any aspect of the Final Project Report and Personal Reflections, in particular the points selected by the examiners at their preliminary meeting. The candidate should have the opportunity to respond to themes and issues that might become part of the corrections, amendments or resubmission requirements.
- 6.9 At the end of the oral examination, the candidate and supervisor are required to withdraw. The Chair will inform the candidate of the approximate time when the announcement of the outcome is expected. The Chair will then discuss with the Exam Board Members the Candidate's performance in the Viva Voce Examination, in relation to the Candidate's response to their questions about the submitted Final Project Report and Reflections. The Exam Board team will then consider the outcome in relation to the Candidate's performance and the submitted Final Project Report and Reflections.
- 6.10 A candidate should be approved for the award of the degree of Professional Doctorate after a satisfactory oral examination without the requirement for



changes to the Final Project Report and Personal Reflections (other than corrections or amendments), when the criteria for the award have been met. In these circumstances, if the examiners consider that it would be possible to improve the Final Project Report and Personal Reflections further by additional work, then this should be pointed out to the candidate rather than being made a requirement for the award.

7. Decisions of the Exam Board

7.1 After the Viva Voce Examination of the Final Project Report and Personal Reflections, the examiners can make one of the following decisions as appropriate:

- (a) **That the candidate be approved for the Professional Doctorate Degree sought.**
- (b) **That the candidate be approved for the Professional Doctorate Degree sought, subject to the satisfactory completion of minor corrections.** The Exam Board Members may stipulate that the corrections made shall be scrutinised by either or both Examiners. Corrections and amendments shall be completed within a period to be decided by the Examining Board, but normally within 24 weeks (as Professional Doctorate Candidates are part-time) from the date of the official notification to the candidate by the Academic Registry of the outcome of the examination.
- (c) **That the candidate not be approved for the Professional Doctorate Degree sought, but be allowed to modify the Final Project Report and re-submit it for the for the doctoral degree sought on payment of a re-submission fee.** A candidate may be allowed a single opportunity to re-submit the work. The re-submission should take place within a period not exceeding two years. This option is not available in the case of a candidate who has resubmitted the Final Project Report for examination.
- (d) **That the candidate not be approved for the Professional Doctorate Degree sought. The Candidate will exit with the MProf.** The candidate will already have completed enough credits in the taught element of the Professional Practice Doctorate Programme to qualify with the Master's in Professional Practice Award.



- 7.2 In compiling the final report after the *viva voce* examination, the examiners should give clear, detailed guidelines as to the work that is required of the candidate to meet the minimum requirements for the award being sought.
- 7.3 For outcome (b), minor corrections and amendments may consist of the addition of new material or the removal of incorrect and/or misleading material, but should not require an extension of the substance of the research.
- 7.4 For outcome (c), should the examiners be agreed that the research design and execution of the Final Project Report are flawed and/or the Final Project Report and Personal Reflections require substantial re-working, they may permit the candidate to re-submit the Final Project Report and Reflections within two years for the Professional Doctorate. The examiners should be satisfied that there is evidence that the candidate knows what s/he is doing, that the work substantially addresses the problems or issues posed but that its execution in the Final Project Report and Personal Reflections requires modification of a scale capable of being accomplished by the author within the two year period.
- 7.5 **All communications must be channelled through the Chair of the Exam Board.** At no point after the Viva Voce Examination should the examiners communicate with the candidate about the Final Project Report and Personal Reflections submitted, the candidate's performance in the Viva Voce Examination and/or any of the requirements for resubmission of the Final Project Report and Personal Reflections.

8 Appointment of an Arbitrating Examiner

- 8.1 When a difference of opinion arises between the examiners that cannot be resolved the Chair will notify the Vice Chancellor of Cardiff Metropolitan University. The Vice-Chancellor will then appoint another external examiner who shall be asked to arbitrate and whose decision will be the binding recommendation to Research Degrees Committee.

9 Appeals

Candidates who are not recommended by the Examining Board for the award of the degree in respect of which they submitted their thesis may appeal against the decision reached. Appeals must be made in accordance with the University's Appeals Procedure (Postgraduate Research Degree), which can be located on the University's website. The formal results letter issued by the



Academic Registry includes web links to the appeals procedure and application form.

10 Payment of fees and Expenses Claims

All queries or concerns concerning payment of fees and expenses should be addressed directly to the Cardiff Metropolitan University's Academic Registry (see also here).



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