

Guidelines for the Award of PhD by Prior Publication/Portfolio

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1. Introduction

These guidelines provide potential applicants, candidates, and staff involved with the application and course of study with details of the arrangements for the award of PhD by prior publication/portfolio and should be read in conjunction with the general regulations for the University and the Academic Regulations for Research Degrees.

The PhD by prior publication/portfolio allows people who have not followed the traditional academic route towards a PhD to obtain academic recognition for having undertaken and produced research, and developed their research skills and subject knowledge to a doctoral level. This may include people entering higher education in mid-career, especially in practice-based disciplines.

The PhD by prior publication/portfolio differs from the 'traditional' PhD in that it is normally based upon research already undertaken before registration for the degree that has led to a number of coherent publications or a body of publicly-accessible creative outputs. Whereas a 'traditional' PhD requires students to receive training in research methodology and develop appropriate personal and interpersonal skills, for the PhD by prior publication/portfolio route such training would normally have been done prior to coming to Kingston University and would be demonstrable through the research publications/outputs. The research skills obtained are therefore recognised and evaluated in retrospect and would be expected to be equivalent to a traditional PhD student who has reached the beginning of the writing-up stage.

Note that candidates may be expected to attend Kingston University in person to meet with their supervisor/s and attend training. This should be agreed in advance of registration. The viva voce (oral examination) may be in person or online.

2. Eligibility

The award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy by Prior Publication/Portfolio shall be open to

- a) all members of staff of Kingston University beyond the probationary period of employment who can demonstrate a record of publications or other public outputs of research of appropriate quantity and quality and who do not already hold a doctoral degree in the same or cognate discipline or area of research
- b) external applicants who can demonstrate a record of publications or other public outputs of research of appropriate quantity and quality to benefit from this form of doctoral study.

In both instances, the body of research outputs must:

- a) demonstrate a quantity, quality and level of research equivalent to that of a traditional PhD student who has reached the beginning of the writing-up stage
- b) be at least equal to the length or volume of a standard PhD thesis
- c) provide evidence of the acquisition and utilisation of research skills equivalent to those of a traditional PhD student who has reached the beginning of the writing-up stage
- d) have been novel at the time of publication (addressing the requirement for a PhD to be the creation and interpretation of new knowledge)
- e) The work should be traceable in publicly available databases such as catalogues and must be accessible to scholars or other interested persons.

The degree will be awarded on the basis of materials and submitted publications as described below and defined and formally recognised by the appropriate subject and disciplinary area.

In the event of any issues arising regarding eligibility, the proposal should be referred initially to the Faculty Research Degrees Committee (FRDC).

Applicants to the Faculty of Science, Engineering and Computing should refer to additional guidance available from the faculty in Appendix D.

3. Registration

The following conditions will apply to the candidate's registration:

- a) Prior to formal registration, a *prima facie* stage must take place during which the following are considered: the suitability of the applicant; the quality of research publications/outputs; the ability of the university to provide appropriate supervision and resources in the chosen area
- b) The maximum period of registration from the point of approval after the *prima facie* application will normally be one year

- c) No less than two months' notice of intention to submit material for a PhD by published work for examination should be given
- d) The FRDC can approve extensions to registration (up to one year on one occasion only) and suspension of registration (up to one year on one occasion only).

4. Application procedures: the *prima facie* stage

Prior to registering for a PhD by prior publication/portfolio, candidates will be required to undergo a preliminary evaluation. This initial *prima facie* stage will be a 'pre-admission' element, with the objective of enabling the University to make a preliminary judgement as to the quality and coherence of the publications or creative output to be submitted for assessment for a PhD by prior publication/portfolio, the likelihood of a submission which will meet the criteria for an award, and the ability of the relevant research area or School within the university to provide appropriate supervision and resources.

See also *Appendix A: Guidance for prima facie sub-committee members for the PhD by prior publication/portfolio*

The following application procedure should be followed

- a) Prospective applicants should contact the Faculty Research Student Coordinator (FRSC) of the Faculty most closely associated with their research area, providing a full CV including all publications and research outputs and information regarding the percentage contributions of any co-authored work, together with the title and a summary of the proposed PhD. The FRSC will pass the CV to an academic nominated by the relevant Head of School, usually the School PGR Coordinator, for initial discussion regarding the quality of the applicant's research, their career and educational background, and the resources at the disposal of the University to support registration and successful completion.
- b) The applicant will be notified by the FRSC as to whether or not the School wishes to support the application and if yes a supervisor will be identified. The supervisor will discuss the application with the applicant and advise on the subsequent steps of the application procedure. Supervisors must be a permanent member of KU academic staff and have previously supervised a PhD student to completion. Where supervisors do not have such completions, a supervisory team must be formed which comprises at least one other member of academic staff who has PhD completions.
- c) After consulting with the proposed supervisor the applicant should then submit an application consisting of the following documents to the Faculty Research Student Coordinator:
 - A statement of support from the proposed supervisor
 - a full cv including all publications and research outputs
 - a brief summary of the relevant publications and/or portfolio materials to be included in the final PhD submission (see Appendix A)

- a statement of intent/outline of the introductory section of approximately 500-700 words.

This should include the proposed title of the work and seek to contextualise the selected publications and demonstrate their coherence as a body of research. It should address how and in what respect the work has made a significant and coherent contribution of knowledge, including:

- The impact within its discipline
- The methodologies used
- A clear indication of any parts of the work which may have been carried out in collaboration with other parties/authors, or have been used for another award

- d) These documents will be submitted by the Faculty Research Student Co-ordinator to the Head of School, who will then confirm or decline support for the application and the availability of the supervisory team.
- e) If supported by the School, the FRDC will appoint a Prima-facie Sub-Committee to review the documentation. This Sub-Committee should comprise at least three members, including one subject expert and one experienced supervisor and will be chaired by the Chair of the FRDC. Discussion may take place via email.
- f) The Prima-facie Sub-Committee will determine whether there is a prima facie case for examination of the degree of PhD and will recommend one of the following:
- i. There is a *prima facie* case for admission to the degree of PhD
 - ii. There is no *prima facie* case for admission to the degree of PhD at this stage but the panel would be willing to reconsider the application after revisions have been made
 - iii. There is a no *prima facie* case for admission to the degree of PhD
- g) The decision will be ratified by the FRDC by Chair's action and reported at the next FRDC meeting.
- h) Once the prima-facie stage has been completed the applicant should complete the standard online application form, if they have not already done so. This form must be completed for formal registration to take place.

5. The role of the Supervisor

The nominated supervisor will act in a similar role to that of a supervisor for a standard PhD project, but with more emphasis on being a mentor to the candidate. They will act as a source of support and guidance during the preparation of the research material for examination and for administration of the examination process.

The supervisor will be a permanent member of staff with experience of supervising at least one doctoral student to successful completion, or part of a supervisory team that includes a member of staff with a completion at doctoral level.

The supervisor will:

- Guide the candidate in the final selection of publications for inclusion in the submission;
- Support and advise on the development of the introductory section;
- Guide the candidate in relation to the coherence of the body of work to be submitted;
- Advise the candidate in relation to any research training requirements, for example the Researcher Development session on having your viva;
- Make arrangements for the examination, including nomination of the examining team
- Support the candidate through the examination process.

6. Requirements of the degree: the form of examination

The award consists of two parts:

a) **substantial published work** (published texts or creative output) that must be in the public domain prior to submission for examination for the award. Note that:

- The number of publications will depend on both the academic area and the type of publication included in the submission.
- Such publications may include academic papers, chapters, monographs, books, scholarly editions of a text, technical reports, creative work in relevant areas, or other artefacts.
- Where the candidate is not the first author in co-authored papers and there is no published statement as to the contribution of each author, the extent of their contribution should normally be certified by at least one co-author.
- Normally, the majority of the publications should have been published, but it will be possible to include some publications which are in press or which have been accepted for publication.
- Publications/other outputs included in the submission for a PhD by Prior Publication/Portfolio should not have been used in the submission for another award by the same applicant.
- Publications should demonstrate that the quality, extent and level of research undertaken is at least equivalent to that expected of a traditional PhD student thesis

b) an **introductory section** demonstrating that the published works contain unifying themes and comprise a coherent body of academic work that meets the requirements for the award of PhD. The introductory section should:

- set the published work or creative output in the context of existing literature and evaluate the contribution that the research makes to the advancement of the chosen subject or professional area
- stress the coherence of the publications, linking them to the methodology adopted
- demonstrate the acquisition and utilisation of appropriate research skills equivalent to those of a traditional PhD student who has reached the end of the writing-up stage
- include a section relating to the candidate's research methodology. This is particularly relevant if detail regarding methodology is not included in the publications. The PhD is about rigour of research process as well as the originality of the outcomes
- in cases where the works are jointly authored by the applicant and other persons the introductory section should also describe the roles played by those joint authors,

and contain percentage estimates of the applicant's input into each jointly authored work. Certification of the extent of their contribution by at least one co-author should be included.

- be approximately 10,000 words in length, exceptionally, where the complexity or volume of the work requires further analysis a higher word count may be submitted, up to a maximum of 30,000 words.

7. Examination procedures

The regulations and procedures governing the examination for PhD theses also apply to PhD by prior publication/portfolio, except that the examiners' recommendations are limited to the following:

- i. that the award of the degree of PhD should be made
- ii. that the candidate be allowed to resubmit the portfolio with a revised introductory section by a specified date (normally within three months); or
- iii. that the material submitted in the portfolio falls short of the requirements, and the degree should not be awarded

Please see the *Postgraduate Researcher Handbook* for more details.

See also *Appendix B: Guidance for Examiners of the PhD by prior publication/portfolio*.

8. Format of submission for examination

A copy of the documents/materials for each examiner, plus if appropriate, a copy for the supervisor, should be submitted for examination, in a variety of formats according to their nature;

- a) Where possible materials should be securely fixed in a hardback folder(s) or ring binder(s). In all circumstances the introductory section should at least be bound into a ring binder;
- b) If normal binding of the materials is not possible then they should be submitted in a rigid box file(s);
- c) Any non-print items should be of good quality to avoid excessive deterioration;
- d) Where the submitted material is in a form that cannot be duplicated or readily stored (work of art, performance etc) an appropriate form of submission and/or alternate arrangements for examination shall be agreed by the University Research Degrees Committee (URDC), before approval for submission is given.

Note that plagiarism detection software may be used.

9. Final submission: binding PhDs by Prior Publication/Portfolio

- a) The University prefers electronic submission of research degree theses. This may not be possible for previously published work due to publisher's restrictions. If this is the case a hard copy may be submitted of the thesis as a whole plus an electronic version of the

introductory section which will be submitted to the British Library and be placed on the Research Repository.

- b) For hard copies, the agreed final version of the research work should be presented and bound according to standard University guidelines. Alternatively, a clearly labelled box file may be used with the introductory section and abstract in a hard bound cover and any books/articles in perfect binding within this.

Maps, diagrams and other such materials should be presented in a clearly labelled and robust portfolio. Non-print items should be securely packaged and labelled. All these materials should be of good quality and able to withstand prolonged storage, without excessive deterioration.

Where, for any legitimate reason, it is not possible to comply with the above conditions, the form of the final submission of documents/materials must be agreed by the URDC before approval for examination is given.

10. Tuition Fees

Tuition fees for the PhD by prior publication/portfolio are as follows:

For applicants who are not currently staff of Kingston University, the fee is the same as the yearly full-time home/EU or overseas [PhD fee](#).

For current Kingston University staff, subject to agreement by the employing faculty, the annual fee is £750.

Appendix A: Materials acceptable for Submission

The candidate must submit a portfolio of peer-verified outputs which are in the public domain and / or published research which must constitute a substantial and coherent body of work which is comparable to the extent of work required of a standard PhD programme.

There is no defined number of publications but candidates need to ensure that the range of publications demonstrates that their work forms a coherent and significant contribution to knowledge. Publications should be of an acceptable national, or preferably international, standing.

The percentage contribution to co-authored work must be indicated, as must any work used for another award.

Publications:

Refereed articles/papers in journals

Conference proceedings

Monographs

Books

Chapters in books

Portfolio Submission (requires collection of evidence that documents and authenticates processes and outputs)

project reports

published books/chapters/articles/manuscripts

project materials

patents (note that patents may be included as part of a portfolio that also includes publications, but a portfolio may not be solely made up of patents)

software programs

surveys

maps

multimedia packages

feedback from project sponsors

design materials

conference papers

CD/DVD/video/film presentations

exhibitions/productions

These lists are not exhaustive and other submissions may be considered.

University Research Degrees Committee

Appendix B: Guidance for *prima facie* sub-committee members for the PhD by prior publication/portfolio

These guidance notes should be read in conjunction with the general regulations for the University, the Academic Regulations for Research Degrees and the Guidelines for PhD by prior publication/portfolio.

The sub-committee will comprise at least three members, including one subject expert and one experienced supervisor and will be chaired by the Chair of the FRDC. Discussion may take place via email.

By recommending that there is a *prima facie* case for admission, the sub-committee are confirming that there is evidence that the candidate:

- Has a substantial body of work and skills that can be considered to be the equivalent of a traditional PhD at the beginning of the writing-up process
- Has the required supporting statements
- Is likely to meet the required standard for a PhD
- Includes evidence of a unifying theme across the publications/outputs
- Includes evidence of originality
- Includes evidence of research skills equivalent to those expected of a traditional PhD student in the relevant discipline
- Has proposed a suitable PhD title
- An appropriate supervisor/s in place

The sub-committee should recommend one of the following:

- i. There is a *prima facie* case for admission to the degree of PhD
- ii. There is no *prima facie* case for admission to the degree of PhD at this stage but the panel would be willing to reconsider the application after revisions have been made
- iii. There is a no *prima facie* case for admission to the degree of PhD

The decision will be ratified by the FRDC by Chair's action and reported at the next FRDC meeting.

Appendix C: Guidance for Examiners of the PhD by prior publication/portfolio

These guidelines are designed to help examiners, particularly those who may have no prior experience of assessing PhDs by prior publication/portfolio, by alerting them to some of the special issues which may arise. They may also act as further information for applicants, registered students and supervisors regarding the criteria for assessment. They should be read in conjunction with the following information provided to examiners for the 'traditional' PhD route:

- *Guidance Notes Relating to the Examination of Candidates for Research Degrees at Kingston University*
- *Academic Regulations for Research Degrees*
- *Criteria for Assessment*

The points below are an extract from the 2004 UKCGE report *'The Award of PhD by Published Work in the UK'* by Stuart Powell*.

The examiners' main tasks may be interpreted as to:

- evaluate the intellectual merit of the candidate's cited published and/or creative work;
- establish if a satisfactory case is made for coherence between the publications/outputs;
- assess the contribution to knowledge represented by the publications/portfolio and made apparent in any critical appraisal;
- evaluate the rigour with which the candidate has contextualised and analysed his/her publications/portfolio in any critical appraisal;
- evaluate the appropriateness of the methods employed in the research and the correctness of their application;
- assess the candidate's contribution to the various phases of the research embodied in multi-authored works;
- establish the candidate's 'ownership' of the published work and appreciation of the state of [historical and current] knowledge within the candidate's research area;
- assess the candidate's research skills in terms of his/her potential as a continuing, independent researcher.

To note:

Due to constraints imposed by publishers, published work may contain less detail than a traditional thesis. There may be instances where the evidence available to the examiner about the quality of the work and the raw data on which important conclusions are based is minimal or even absent. Whilst to some extent this should have been addressed in the introductory section, the oral examination should be used as an opportunity to question the candidate on how conclusions were reached.

Extract from the Kingston University Academic Regulations for Research Degrees: DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY by submission of a portfolio of published works:

10 The regulations governing examination of PhD theses shall apply to the examination of the portfolio, except that the examiners' recommendations shall be limited to those in paragraph 11.

11 Following the examination (including any oral examination), the examiners must make a joint recommendation of either:

- i. that the award of the degree of PhD should be made
- ii. that the candidate be allowed to resubmit the portfolio with a revised introductory section; or**
- iii. that the material submitted in the portfolio falls short of the requirements, and the degree should not be awarded

12 In the case of recommendation 11 ii, the candidate must be provided with written guidance, using the standard form supplied by the Graduate Research School or Faculty Research Student Co-ordinator, on the additional material required and/or corrections to be made to the introductory section. In the case of recommendation 11 iii, the candidate will be informed that no further submission of this portfolio will be accepted for consideration for the award of PhD.

*UK Council for Graduate Education (2004), *The Award of PhD by Published Work in the UK*, Stuart Powell, Lichfield, UKCGE (ISBN 0-9543915-2-7)

**amendments should be submitted within 3 months of notification

University Research Degrees Committee

Appendix D: Additional guidance for applicants to the Faculty of Engineering, Computing and the Environment (ECE)

ECE PhD Publication Guidelines for PhD by prior publication / portfolio

PhD by prior publication / portfolio is based on publications that have been published as peer-reviewed assessed outputs. Publications in press that have been accepted but not yet published can be included as part of the submission. It is not a requirement for the First Supervisor to be co-author in these publications.

The student is normally expected to be the first author, so the publications' contributions can be directly linked to the set of outcomes from the PhD thesis. In cases where the student is not the first author, e.g. in publications resulting from multidisciplinary collaborations, unique contributions related to the PhD project should be identifiable.

Publications should demonstrate that a quantity, quality and level of research is at least equal to a standard PhD thesis, so the claim of a "substantial independent and original contribution to knowledge, commensurate with the normal period of registration" should be supported. It is normally expected that some work has been published by a journal ranked in the top two quartiles (Q1 or Q2) by [Scimago](#) as an indicator of quality.