

The Supervisor's Role in the MPhil/PhD Examination Process

This document consists of a step-by-step guide to the MPhil/PhD Examination Process from the supervisor's viewpoint. If you have any further queries regarding the process at any stage, please do not hesitate to contact Student Administration: e-mail: researchdegrees@rhul.ac.uk / tel: 01784 414647

Further details can be found

at <http://www.rhul.ac.uk/ecampus/academicsupport/examinations/researchdegrees/supervisors.aspx>

Stage 1 - MPhil/PhD Examination Entry Form

- Your candidate should complete their [MPhil/PhD Examination Entry Form](#). Once the candidate has completed sections A-C of the MPhil/PhD Examination Entry form, it should be passed on to you for the completion of section D (the nomination of examiners).
- Please refer to the 'Guidance on the Appointment of MPhil/PhD Examiners' on the Pre-Submission / Entry Form tab at <http://www.rhul.ac.uk/ecampus/academicsupport/examinations/researchdegrees/supervisors.aspx>, plus the [Research Degree Regulations](#), for guidelines about the nomination of examiners. If your Department has elected to have an Independent Chair at the viva, the Independent Chair should be nominated in section D. A '[Guide to the Appointment and Role of the Independent Chair](#)' can be found on the same tab.
- Once the section D has been completed, the form should be signed and then passed on to your Director of Graduate Studies for his/her signature.
- At least **two months** before the candidate intends on submitting their thesis, the completed MPhil/PhD Examination Entry Form should then be sent to Student Administration for processing. Please note that, if the Entry Form does not arrive two months in advance, there may be a delay in appointing the examiners and the viva date may have to be delayed.

Stage 2 – Approval of Nominated Examiners

- The details of the nominated examiners (and Independent Chair, if applicable) will be sent to the College Board of Examiners Executive Committee for their approval. Please see the [Nomination of Examiners Flowchart](#) for further information.
- Once the examiners have been approved, you and the candidate will be informed.
- The examiners will be sent an official invitation to examine your candidate.

Stage 3 – Submission of Thesis

- When ready, the candidate will submit their thesis to Student Administration. Please note that theses **must not** be submitted directly to the examiners; the theses must be processed by Student Administration and contact between the candidate and examiners should be restricted prior to the viva. On submission, the candidate is required to present a '[Declaration of Number of Words](#)' form, which must be signed by yourself, as supervisor.

Stage 4 – Viva Oral Examination

- Once the thesis has been submitted, the supervisor will be asked by Student Administration to organise the viva.
- As soon as the viva is organised, and ideally at least one month prior to the date of the viva, the supervisor must inform Student Administration at researchdegrees@rhul.ac.uk of the date and location of the viva. Please refer to the [‘Best Practice Tips for Arranging the Viva’](#) document for further details.
- The examiners are required to submit their Preliminary Reports on the thesis prior to the date of the viva. Student Administration sends reminders to the examiners. If the reports have not been received by the morning of the viva, the supervisor will be contacted and asked to ensure that the examiners hand in their Preliminary Reports before the viva starts. Please note that the viva should not take place until the Preliminary Reports have been submitted by both examiners. Otherwise, the viva will be in breach of the College Regulations and open to appeal by the candidate.
- For those candidates who apply to enter the examination after 01 November 2012, it is a regulatory requirement that an audio recording be made of the viva or an Independent Chair be present. For the ‘Guidance on the Audio Recording of Vivas’ and the ‘Guidance on the Appointment and Role of the Independent Chair’, please refer to the Viva tab at <http://www.rhul.ac.uk/ecampus/academicsupport/examinations/researchdegrees/supervisors.aspx>
- The supervisor can attend the viva as an observer provided that the candidate has not indicated on the Entry Form that his/ her supervisor should not be present. The examiners will be informed if the supervisor will not be present.

Stage 5 – Decision

- After the viva, the examiners will send their Joint Final Report and Decision Report to Student Administration. This should be within two weeks of the oral examination.
- Student Administration will arrange ratification of the decision by the Faculty Dean and then officially inform you and your candidate of the decision of the examiners. Please note that, if the examiners’ original decision was ‘Pass subject to Minor Amendments’ or ‘Pass subject to Amendments to Address Errors of Substance or Omission’, you will not be informed of the decision until these amendments have been satisfactorily completed and the candidate has passed.
- You will be sent a copy of the Decision Report form, the Final Joint Report form and the Preliminary Report forms. Please note that the candidate should not be permitted to view the Preliminary Report forms unless specifically requested by the examiners