

# University of Cape Town



## Doctoral Degrees Board

### PhD STUDENTS' EXAMINATION GUIDE

- Applications:** For all PhD degrees are processed by the faculty offices.
- Candidature:** Once a student is accepted, the proposal must be approved by the faculty and ratified by the DDB.
- Registration:** All students register in their respective faculties for each year of registration.
- Examination:** PhD candidates upload their intention to submit and thesis on PeopleSoft.
- Graduation:** Once the examination process is completed, the DDB Office informs the PhD candidate that the PhD degree will be awarded at the upcoming graduation ceremony. Graduation is administered by the Student Records Office.

#### A. REGISTERED FOR A MINIMUM OF 2 YEARS BEFORE SUBMISSION OF THESIS

A PhD Candidate can submit their thesis for examination at any time subject to being registered for **2 years**.

While the Doctoral Degrees Board (DDB) will not insist on the supervisor's approval before accepting a PhD thesis for examination, it is recommended that candidates submit with the approval of their supervisors.

At the conclusion of your research, you will be able to complete and submit your intention to submit form on PeopleSoft, followed by the submission of your thesis for examination. All communication from UCT regarding the examination process will be addressed to your UCT e-mail account.

#### B. NAMING CONVENTIONS FOR ABSTRACT, THESIS & LIBRARY COPY FILES

**Thesis** - Submit your thesis/dissertation document in a **single PDF file format** (publication of this will be deferred if an embargo has been approved).

**Abstract-Open** - This must be attached to all Library Upload Service Requests and will be published immediately upon Graduation regardless of any embargo. All students must upload this type of abstract.

**Abstract-Restricted** - This must be attached to any Library Upload Service Request where the abstract contains confidential information. It must not be published by the library until the embargo is lifted. Only students with a pre-approved suppression form will upload this type of abstract.

### C. SUBMISSION DATES

A PhD candidate must submit their **Notice of Intention to Submit Thesis** for examination on PeopleSoft:

- At least **8 weeks** before submission of their thesis for examination.

It is recommended that a PhD candidate submit their **Thesis for Examination** on PeopleSoft:

- At least 5 months before the before the deadline for qualification entry to the graduation ceremony to allow time for the examination process to run its course.

To **avoid re-registration**:

- PhD candidates are required to submit their theses by 12h00 on **the first day of the new academic year**. After the first day of the new academic year, students who have not submitted their thesis will be required to re-register and pay fees.

Please read the [Graduation and Submission Notice](#).

**Kindly note that the University does not undertake to reach a decision on the award of the doctoral degree by any specific date.**

## D. SUBMISSION PROCESS

### STEP 1: Submission of Notice of Intent

A PhD candidate is required to submit the following **(8 weeks prior to the submission of your thesis)** in **PDF format** on PeopleSoft:

[Use the PeopleSoft reference guide](#)

1. **DDB08 (Thesis Open Access Suppression Form)** in (PDF format):  
only applicable if you and your supervisor wish to apply to suppress your thesis.
2. **DDB09 (Notice of Intention to Submit PhD thesis)** in (PDF format).
3. **DDB10 (PhD IP Assessment Form)** in (PDF format) **compulsory for EBE, Health Sciences and Science faculties.**
4. **DDB14 (Confidentiality on the nomination of examiners)** in (PDF format) compulsory for all faculties.
5. **Abstract:**  
named **Abstract-Open** in (PDF format).

These forms can be obtained from the [Doctoral Candidates Webpage](#)

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF NOTICE OF INTENTION TO SUBMIT

- Please note that the acknowledgement of your notice of intent is **not immediate**. The DDB Office will check your service request, process it and acknowledge receipt **within 1 week, if possible**.
- You may also log onto the PeopleSoft Student Administration Self Service to check the status of your service request.
- An acknowledgement of receipt will be sent to the candidate, the supervisor (to appoint potential examiners) & to the relevant faculty.

### STEP 2: Submission of Thesis for Examination

A PhD candidate is required to submit their thesis and supporting documentation on PeopleSoft. All thesis documents must be uploaded in one service request in **PDF format** with the exception of the citation file:

[Use the PeopleSoft reference guide](#)

1. **Thesis:**  
One electronic copy in (PDF format) named **Thesis**.
2. A **Signed Declaration** should be included **in the thesis** regarding the extent to which it represents your own work, both in concept and execution.
3. **Abstract:**  
named **Abstract-Open** in (PDF format).
4. **DDB11 - Declaration Ethics and Submission Form** in (PDF format): named **DDB11** (Signed and dated the **same date that you have uploaded your thesis**).
  - **Ethics requirement.** In Section C of the ddb11 form - please indicate whether **ethics clearance was required** for your thesis research. If ethics was required, please upload a **copy/proof of ethics approval**.
  - **If ethics approval was not required**, please upload a **signed letter of confirmation** that ethics clearance was not required for your thesis research.

5. **DDB13 Turnitin Plagiarism Declaration** in (PDF format): named **Turnitin Plagiarism Declaration**.
6. **Citation** in MS Word format (**approved by your supervisor**) (name the file **Citation**).
7. In the **Comment Box**:  
*"I confirm that the uploaded document is the thesis to be examined."*

These forms can be obtained from the [Doctoral Candidates Webpage](#)

#### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF THESIS FOR EXAMINATION**

- Please note that the acknowledgement of your thesis is **not immediate**. The DDB Office will check your service request, process it and acknowledge receipt **within 1 week, if possible**.
- You may also log onto the PeopleSoft Student Administration Self Service to check the status of your service request.

### **STEP 3: Submission of Thesis Library Copy: Requirement for Graduation**

A PhD candidate is required to submit their thesis library copy **prior to graduation** on PeopleSoft. The thesis library copy (namely the thesis, abstract and thesis metadata) will be published on the OpenUCT digital institutional repository after graduation. **Please note** that if you do not upload your library copy you will not be eligible for graduation:

[Use the PeopleSoft reference guide](#)

1. **Thesis:**  
One electronic copy of the corrected thesis in (PDF format) named **Thesis**.
2. **Abstract:**  
named **Abstract-Open** in (PDF format).

#### **IF YOUR THESIS IS EMBARGOED/SUPPRESSED DUE TO INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY OR SENSITIVE CONTENT**

**Please upload the following three files:**

1. **Thesis:**  
One electronic copy of the corrected thesis in (PDF format) named **Thesis**
2. **Abstract:**  
named **Abstract-Open** in (PDF format)
3. **Abstract (neutralised):**  
named **Abstract-Restricted** in (PDF format)

## E. EXAMINATION PROCESS

- a) Please note that the examination process is ***confidential***.
- b) While every effort will be made to process the work for examination as soon as possible, ***the University does not undertake to reach a decision on the award of the degree by any specific date. You will be notified of the outcome once the examination process has been completed.***
- c) External Examiners are appointed and approved by the candidate's Faculty Higher Degrees Committee (known as the Doctoral Committee of Assessors) and the Chair of the DDB.
- d) It is the policy of the DDB not to reveal the names of the examiners to candidates during the examination process of a PhD thesis.
- e) Once approved by the Chair of the DDB, the DDB Office formally invites the examiners to examine a PhD thesis.
- f) Once the examiners have accepted the invitation, the DDB Office sends the thesis to each examiner.
- g) Examiners are required to submit a report and recommendation on the PhD thesis and have the option to indicate whether or not they wish their identity to be disclosed to the candidate (after the final decision has been made by the DDB on the result of the examination process).
- h) An examiner can make one of the following recommendations:

OPTION	EXAMINER RECOMMENDATION
i	The candidate should be awarded the degree and <u><i>no further corrections</i></u> to the thesis are required.
ii	The candidate should be awarded the degree <u><i>subject to corrections</i></u> . The corrections required are either: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Trivial/ Typographical, or</i></li> <li>• <i>Typographical and more substantial, specified changes. My suggestions are indicated in my report. These corrections do not alter the substance of the thesis in any fundamental manner and therefore major reworking or reinterpretation of the intellectual content of the thesis is not required.</i></li> </ul>
iii	The candidate should not be awarded the degree but should be invited to address my substantive concerns and <u><i>to revise and resubmit</i></u> the thesis for re-examination. In this case, either: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>I am prepared to re-examine, or</i></li> <li>• <i>I am not prepared to re-examine.</i></li> </ul>
iv	The candidate should <u><i>not be awarded</i></u> the degree as the thesis has no prospect of meeting the requirements.

- i) When all the examiners' reports are received, the DDB Office will send the reports to the relevant Faculty for consideration & recommendation by the Doctoral Committee of Assessors (DCoA). The Chair

of the DCoA will sign off the DCoA recommendation & send it to the DDB Office. The DDB Office then sends the recommendation to the Chair of the DDB for approval.

## F. ORAL EXAMINATION PILOT

The Doctoral Degrees Board has embarked on a pilot for the oral examination of the PhD thesis. Candidates are asked to volunteer for the oral examination by emailing [phdoral@uct.ac.za](mailto:phdoral@uct.ac.za) upon the submission of their intention.

### Initial examination and preparation for oral:

- a) The thesis will be sent to each examiner with a 4-to-5-week period provided to return their preliminary individual reports to the DDB. *Examiners will be invited also to include questions they will raise at the oral examination if they choose to share these with the candidate in advance.*
- b) The oral examination will be set for 6 to 7 weeks after sending the thesis out to examiners. Arrangements for the oral examination will be made through the DDB Office.
- c) The DDB staff will share the examiners' reports with the PhD candidate *at least a week* in advance of the date of the oral examination. Where examiners provided key questions for the candidate, these will also be provided to the candidate in advance. It is expected that the PhD candidate will have 10 days to prepare for the oral examination.
- d) Where examiners' reports make suggestions for or require corrections to the thesis in their initial reports, such will be confirmed and seen to after the outcome of the oral examination.

### The oral examination

- a) The oral examination will take place via MS Teams and will be scheduled for a 2 – 2.5-hour period. The time of the oral examination will be determined taking into account the time-zones of the external examiners.
- b) The UCT staff and PhD candidate will be accommodated together on campus in a smart venue with the external examiners participating remotely.
- c) The structure of the examination is as follows:
  - i. Part I
    - 5 min Chair Welcome and introduction
    - 15 min live student presentation (which may include slides suitable for remote sharing)
    - 45-75 minutes for examiner questions, which may be based on questions the examiners may already have raised, or indicated they want clarification on, and further questions raised during this session.
  - ii. Part II
    - 30–60-minute closed session for the oral committee, in the absence of the student, for deliberation and the finalization of a short joint report and recommendation.
    - Where the output of the oral committee is unanimous, this will go direct to the DDB as a recommendation to decide the result.
    - Where dispute remains on the outcome of the process, the reports and record provided by the DDB note-taker will be presented at a CoA meeting and subsequent presentation of a recommendation to the DDB.
    - If the oral committee recommends a 'revise and resubmit' the recommendation goes to the CoA to deliberate. The CoA will report on its deliberations and make a recommendation to the DDB.
    - The student will be informed of the outcome by the DDB Office only once the result has been decided by the DDB.

[Please see the Oral Examination FAQ](#)

## G. NOTIFICATION OF OUTCOME OF EXAMINATION

Once the DDB Chair approves the DCoA recommendation, the DDB Office will notify the student of the outcome of the examination by email.

A PhD candidate can be awarded one of the following results:

RESULT OF PHD EXAMINATION	
i	The candidate should be awarded the degree and <u>no further corrections</u> to the thesis are required.
ii	The candidate is required to submit a <u>schedule of changes/corrections</u> made to the thesis to the satisfaction of the supervisor. This schedule of corrections approved by the supervisor must be submitted to the <u>Faculty Office</u> for the certification of the DCoA Chair. The approved schedule of corrections must be submitted to the DDB Chair/DDB for final approval. Once approved by the DDB Chair/ DDB, the DDB Office will notify the candidate that the schedule of corrections has been formally approved.
iii	A candidate is required to <u>re-register</u> with the respective Faculty Office and <u>revise and resubmit the PhD thesis</u> , within 1 year to the DDB Office.
iv	A candidate's thesis is <u>failed</u> , and the degree will not be awarded.

## H. GRADUATION

Depending on the outcome of the examination process and the date that the examination process is concluded, a PhD candidate may be eligible to graduate at the next available graduation ceremony.

Graduation ceremonies are managed by the Student Records Office and information relating to graduation is available on their [Graduation webpage](#).

The DDB Office notifies PhD candidates of the outcome of their examination by email. All correspondence to students is sent to their UCT email account (myuct.ac.za).

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