

PhD by Prospective Publication Guidance

1. Definition & General Principle

A PhD by Prospective Publication is an alternative route to doctoral qualification by major thesis. It involves the preparation and submission of a thesis containing submitted or published articles (in peer-reviewed academic journals or professional equivalent) published within the period of registration at City St George's, University of London. Work published prior to entering the programme is not eligible for examination as part of the PhD by Prospective publication. Candidates who have published work prior to joining the institution could consider the PhD by Prior Publication route.

This document outlines the main guidelines that should be followed when considering a PhD by Prospective Publication. However, each application will be considered individually by the School in which the candidate is based.

2. Criteria for Admission to the Degree

- a. The PhD via prospective publication route is open to registered students and staff who declare this route when applying and where the discipline supports it;
- b. The entrance requirements are the same as for those carrying out a PhD via major thesis;
- c. Applications for this route must be scrutinised and recommended by School Research Degrees Programme Committee to the Doctoral College Board of Studies for approval;
- d. The application should include a plan for a related and coherent series of projects that will lead to the publications included in the thesis.

3. Criteria for Assessment

The candidate must demonstrate that they meet the requirements described in the [UK Quality Code](#) for Higher Education (section 4.18). These state that doctoral degrees will be awarded to candidates who have demonstrated:

- a. the creation and interpretation of new knowledge, through original research or other advanced scholarship, of a quality to satisfy peer review, extend the forefront of the discipline, and merit publication;
- b. a systematic acquisition and understanding of a substantial body of knowledge which is at the forefront of an academic discipline or area of professional practice;
- c. the general ability to conceptualise, design and implement a project for the generation of new knowledge, applications or understanding at the forefront of the discipline, and to adjust the project design in the light of unforeseen problems;
- d. a detailed understanding of applicable techniques for research and advanced academic enquiry.

For a PhD via prospective publication, the thesis will normally include between three and six research outputs that have been published, or submitted for publication. Please note that academic judgement from within the discipline is needed to determine the number of prospective publications required, the types of research outputs that could be submitted and their quality. Candidates will also need to include an introductory chapter that sets the scene and justifies why the included publications constitute a coherent whole and that there is an overarching hypothesis to the thesis. To meet the requirement in (b) above, it may be necessary to include a substantive literature review chapter if there isn't a published literature review or systematic

review. It is also important that candidates include author contribution statements using the convention for their discipline e.g. the CRediT taxonomy ([CRediT \(wiley.com\)](https://www.wiley.com)). Candidates should also consider if inclusion of supplementary material could help elaborate any gaps in the included articles.

4. Advantages

- Students build a publication record during the PhD supporting their future career;
- Students learn about academic writing for publication;
- Most of the content of the thesis will already have been peer reviewed;
- Students may find that the external peer review process provides reassurance and therefore they feel more confident entering the viva.

5. Disadvantages

- Some journals in certain disciplines limit word length making it harder to demonstrate fully the descriptors for the award of a doctorate;
- Peer review is by nature subjective. It is possible examiners may take a different view of some of the work in the thesis.
- The publication process can be slow and this can affect particularly full-time students;
- Examiners may not be familiar with the format of a prospective publication thesis. Schools should develop guidance notes, which are discipline specific, to support examiners;

6. Related Policies

The PhD by Prospective publication guidelines should be read in conjunction with the policies below and the Guidance Notes for Examiners in Appendix A.

Intellectual Property policy	Senate Regulation 24
Registration of a Research Degree Student policy	Senate Regulation 25
Research Degrees Framework	

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PhD by Prospective Publication

Guidance notes for Examiners

1. Introduction

You have been invited to examine a PhD at City St George's, which falls under the format of a PhD by Prospective Publication. The QAA define this as a type of doctorate under the category "Doctorates by Publication" ([Characteristics Statement - Doctoral Degrees \(qaa.ac.uk\)](https://www.qaa.ac.uk/characteristics-statement-doctoral-degrees)). A PhD by prospective publication is also referred to as a concurrent publication doctorate. In either case they include material published during the period of registration. The final assessment involves the assessment of a thesis incorporating the published material and a viva voce examination. The main characteristics of a PhD by prospective publication are defined by the QAA as "*A candidate presents a portfolio of interconnected, published research papers contextualised by a coherent narrative, demonstrating overall an original contribution to knowledge. Such publications may include papers, chapters, monographs, books, scholarly editions of a text, technical reports, creative work in relevant areas, or other artefacts.*"

Freedom of Speech

City St George's, University of London, regards freedom of speech and academic freedom to be fundamental to delivering its mission as the University of business, practice and the professions. Its values in this respect are set out in a code of practice on freedom of speech and academic freedom, which explains how the University will uphold, secure, and promote freedom of speech within the law. See: <https://www.citystgeorges.ac.uk/about/governance/policies/code-of-practice-on-freedom-of-speech>. Nothing in this policy should be interpreted in any way that would be inconsistent with the code of practice and – in the event of any inconsistency – the provisions of the code will prevail.

2. Overarching requirements

The objectives you are assessing for a PhD by prospective publication are the same as for a specialist subject PhD by major thesis. Candidates have to demonstrate to your satisfaction ([sector-recognised-standards.pdf \(officeforstudents.org.uk\)](https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/sector-recognised-standards.pdf)):

- i. The creation and interpretation of new knowledge, through original research or other advanced scholarship, of a quality to satisfy peer review, extend the forefront of the discipline, and merit publication.
- ii. A systematic acquisition and understanding of a substantial body of knowledge which is at the forefront of an academic discipline or area of professional practice.
- iii. The general ability to conceptualise, design and implement a project for the generation of new knowledge, applications or understanding at the forefront of the discipline, and to adjust the project design in the light of unforeseen problems.
- iv. A detailed understanding of applicable techniques for research and advanced academic enquiry.

The thesis should present a coherent body of knowledge in a particular area and this should be evident from the narrative (see QAA statement in section 1). City St George's Guidance specifically states:

- The thesis will normally include between 3 and 6 research outputs that have been published, or submitted for publication, commonly in a peer-reviewed journal (the exact number will vary by discipline).
- The journals used should be considered of good quality within the relevant discipline.
- Candidates will need to include an introductory chapter that sets the scene and justifies why the included publications constitute a coherent whole and that there is an overarching hypothesis to the thesis.
- To meet the OfS requirement in (ii) above, it may be necessary to include a substantive literature review chapter if there isn't a published literature review or systematic review.
- Candidates should include author contribution statements using the convention for their discipline e.g. the CRediT taxonomy ([CRediT \(wiley.com\)](https://www.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/anie.201702003)).
- Candidates should also consider if inclusion of supplementary material would help elaborate any gaps in the included articles.

3. Some specific considerations for examination of a PhD by prospective publication:

- v. The thesis and viva voce must allow you to assess whether the candidate has demonstrated the sector standards in 2 (i) – (iv) above.
- vi. Where the publications in the thesis contain multiple authors, you should test the contribution of the candidate and that this is reflected in the author contribution statements.
- vii. Journal papers are often limited in length. The viva can be used to test that the student has undertaken the preliminary work for the paper, which may not appear in the final version. An example would be pilot or feasibility work that underpinned a published study.
- viii. It is acceptable to ask for supplementary information to be provided within the thesis if it supports demonstration of the characteristics of a doctorate.
- ix. The candidate should decide the format of how published papers are included in the thesis. If the candidate wishes to include the final typeset version of the published papers, they need to clarify that they own copyright of each paper. If they do not own copyright, they need to obtain permission from the Copyright owner (this is usually the publisher) to include the typeset version. Alternatively, the final author manuscript can be placed in the thesis.
- x. Given these final author manuscripts have been subsequently typeset by the journal publisher, it is not appropriate to request changes in content. It is, however, reasonable to ask for typographical changes or errors to be corrected since the thesis will become a public document. Further exposition of parts of a published paper to meet your requirements as an examiner can be provided as supplementary information at the end of a chapter.
- xi. For the avoidance of doubt, the PhD content is not subject to copyright from a publisher, as the candidate owns that work. However, when the candidate gets any part of their thesis accepted for publication, such as converting a chapter into an article, the work is then subject to the publisher's Terms & Conditions

and copyright requirements.

- xii. Published papers will have been peer reviewed. Although this provides good assurance that the work is sound, it is not a foolproof system. As a result, you may want to question aspects of the published work, and this is acceptable and expected.
- xiii. The more challenging aspects to demonstrate in a prospective publication PhD are the ability to conceptualise, design and implement a project, and an understanding of advanced research techniques and academic enquiry (2 (iii) and (iv) above). The viva may focus more on these areas.

