

Higher Doctorate Degrees

UPR AS02 version 05.0

Policies superseded by this document

This document replaces version 04.1 of UPR AS02, with effect from 1 September 2025.

Summary of significant changes to the previous version

Minor changes have been made to this UPR to reflect updated terminology.

This document has also been updated to reflect the requirements of the OfS Regulatory Advice on freedom of speech (section 1.3).

Glossary

A glossary of approved University terminology can be found in [UPR GV08](#).

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 The University may award Higher Doctorate degrees as specified from time-to-time in UPR AS11¹.
- 1.2 The regulations and procedures set out in this document have been approved by the Academic Board with effect from 1 September 2025 and are operated on behalf of the Academic Board by a Higher Doctorate Degrees Board ('the Board').
- 1.3 *The University is committed to protecting and promoting freedom of speech and academic freedom within the law. The University's Code of Practice on Freedom of Speech (UPR FS01) sets out the rights and obligations inherent in supporting the principles of freedom of speech and academic freedom within the law, the University's values relating to freedom of speech and the procedure to be followed by students and staff in connection with the organisation of events and meetings which fall under the Code of Practice. A copy of the University's Code of Practice on Freedom of Speech (UPR FS01) can be found here [\[FS01-Freedom-of-Speech-Code-of-Practice.pdf\]](#) on the University's Policies and Regulations webpage. In the event of any uncertainty about the University's approach to freedom of speech, the University's definitive and up-to-date statement of its approach is set out in the Code of Practice.*

2 Standard

A Higher Doctorate degree¹ may be awarded to a candidate who is a leading authority in their field of study, and has *a significant body of research-based work which distinguishes them in their field.*

3 Eligibility

- 3.1 A candidate's eligibility to submit for a Higher Doctorate degree is determined at the sole discretion of the Higher Doctorate Degrees Board (section 5, refers).
- 3.2 Candidates for these degrees normally shall:
- i be graduates of no less than **10** years' standing of the University of Hertfordshire or *of Partner Institutions*
 - or
 - ii be current or former members of staff (full-time, part-time, visiting or honorary) of the University of Hertfordshire or *of Partner Institutions*.

4 Applications for the Award of a Higher Doctorate

- 4.1 An application for a Higher Doctorate degree must be based either wholly or substantially on original published work carried out by the candidate.

¹ UPR AS11 'Schedule of Awards'

- 4.2 Any work which has previously been part of a successful submission for any degree awarded by the University or any other institution must be clearly identified by the candidate (section 4.6, iii, refers).
- 4.3 The work submitted for the degree shall not be concurrently submitted by the candidate for a higher doctorate or other comparable award of any other institution and a declaration to this effect shall be submitted by the candidate with *their* application (section 4.6, iii, refers).
- 4.4 A candidate wishing to make an application for the award of a Higher Doctorate shall submit to the *Doctoral College*:
- i a list of the published works on which the application is based;
 - ii a summary, normally not exceeding **4,000** words, of the relevance of the works to the advancement of knowledge in the field concerned;
 - iii a completed 'application to register for a Higher Doctorate degree' form which provides for the statements required in fulfilment of the requirements of sections 4.4 and 4.5;
- Where relevant, the candidate may elect to include a list of further supporting, published or unpublished material with his or her application.
- 4.5 The information provided in accordance with the requirements of section 4.6 will be used by the Higher Doctorate Degrees Board to determine the eligibility of the candidate to submit for the award (section 3 refers) and to determine whether a *preliminary case* for the award has been established (section 6 refers).

5 Higher Doctorate Degrees Board

- 5.1 On receipt of an application, the Vice-Chancellor (or nominee), acting in *their* capacity as Chair of the Academic Board, shall establish a Higher Doctorate Degrees Board. It will normally be the case that a separate Board is established to consider each application received by the University.

6 Establishing a *Preliminary Case* for the Award of a Higher Doctorate

- 6.1 The Higher Doctorate Degrees Board shall determine whether the candidate has established a *preliminary case* for the award of the degree.
- 6.2 In doing so, the Board will consider the information provided in accordance with the requirements of section 4.6 and may also seek advice from other persons, whether or not Members of the University, (UPR GV06², refers) who have expertise and standing in the candidate's field.
- 6.3 The decision of the Board will be communicated to the candidate by the Clerk to the Higher Doctorate Degrees Board and, where the Board has determined that the

² UPR GV06 'Membership of the University'

candidate has not established a *preliminary* case, the application ceases and there is no right of appeal.

6.4 Successful establishment of a *preliminary* case

- 6.4.1 At this stage in the process the candidate will be required to pay the final instalment of the required fee (the remainder after payment of the initial instalment), which is not refundable.
- 6.4.2 The establishment of a *preliminary* case does not in any way imply the eventual award of a degree.

7 Examination

7.1 Appointment of Examiners

- 7.1.1 The Higher Doctorate Degrees Board shall appoint three (3) examiners with appropriate expertise, experience and professional standing. At least two (2) of the examiners will be independent of the University and of any organisation at which the candidate's work was carried out and shall not be co-authors of any of the candidate's cited works.
- 7.1.2 Individuals consulted by the Board in accordance with section 6.2 are not thereby precluded from serving as examiners for the candidate.

7.2 Submission by candidates of material for examination

- 7.2.1 The candidate shall submit to the University, via the *Doctoral College*, three (3) sets of documentation each of which shall include:
 - i a critical appraisal, of not normally less than **4,000** words or more than **10,000** words, of the submitted works which identifies the field and aims of the candidate's research and the original and distinguished contribution to the advancement or application of knowledge in the field represented by the works;
 - ii an offprint or high quality photocopy of each of the published works which have been cited (section 4.6, i, refers), if necessary, giving proof of authenticity. The works shall be numbered and correspond exactly with the list submitted in compliance with
section 4.6, i;
 - iii a copy of other published works cited under the provisions of section 4.5;
 - iv a statement by the applicant concerning their contribution to the work submitted, which should be no more than 400 words.
- 7.2.2 Each set of submitted documentation, excluding books, shall be presented in A4 format. The contents shall be written in English unless the Board has approved otherwise. The Board may give permission for an alternative format to be used for the documentation where it is satisfied that this would be more appropriate. For example, in a submission for the award of Doctor of Music (DMus), musical notation and audio recordings would, where appropriate, be acceptable.

7.2.3 Each copy of the submission shall contain an abstract, a list of contents and a title page each of which includes the following information:

- i the appropriate title relating to the candidate's field of study;
- ii the full name of the candidate;
- iii the following statement:
"Submitted for the degree of (title of degree) of the University of Hertfordshire";
- iv the month and year of submission.

7.2.4 Pages in the critical appraisal shall be numbered consecutively.

7.3 Ethical considerations

In cases where any work submitted by the candidate has been based on a study involving human participants, the candidate shall submit a declaration to the effect that such work was given prior approval by an appropriate body responsible for the maintenance of ethical standards. In cases where such a declaration is subsequently proved to be false, the University reserves the right to withhold or withdraw the award.

7.4 Cheating, plagiarism, collusion or other academic misconduct

Where it is proven that a candidate for a Higher Doctorate degree is guilty of cheating, plagiarism, collusion or other academic misconduct and that this has resulted in an award being made, the University of Hertfordshire reserves the right, as appropriate, either to withhold the award of the degree or to withdraw the degree.

7.5 Examination of the material submitted by the candidate

7.5.1 Each appointed examiner shall consider the candidate's submitted works and provide the Clerk with an individual report and recommendation on whether the degree should be conferred. In making their report, each examiner shall state whether the evidence submitted constitutes an original and distinctive contribution to the advancement or application of knowledge in some particular field of study such that it gives the candidate the status of a leading authority in that field. In cases where an examiner does not recommend that the degree be conferred, his or her report shall identify the deficiencies of the submission, where possible in a way that might be useful to the candidate in the event of further application.

7.5.2 Before making their report, the examiners may seek additional information from the candidate, in writing, through the Clerk. Any such additional information shall be provided to all examiners by the Clerk.

7.5.3 The assent of not less than three (3) members of the Board shall be required to the conferment of any Higher Doctorate degree.

7.5.4 The decision of the Board shall, in all cases, be final.

- 7.5.5 Where the Board determines that an award is not to be made and no procedural error is alleged by the candidate, the candidate may request a Completion of Procedures Letter from the Office of the Dean of Students which may be used in relation to any future dealings with the Office of the Independent Adjudicator.

8 Procedural Errors

- 8.1 Where the candidate believes that there has been a procedural error which has materially affected the outcome of the Board's deliberations, the candidate may make representations, in writing, to the Chair of the Audit Committee of the Board of Governors.
- 8.2 The Chair of the Audit Committee will respond to any such complaint within a period of not more than ten (**10**) working days from the date of its receipt or as soon as possible thereafter.
- 8.3 The decision of the Chair of the Audit Committee shall, in all cases, be final.
- 8.4 At the conclusion of this process, the candidate will be issued with a Completion of Procedures Letter which may be used in relation to any future dealings with the Office of the Independent Adjudicator.

9 Further Applications

Candidates to whom the degree is not awarded may after a two-year period, submit a new application, in accordance with the requirements of section 4, provided that such an application contains additional published work relevant to the field of study.

10 Disposal of the Candidate's Application

The disposal of the three (**3**) copies of the candidate's application shall be at the discretion of the Higher Doctorate Degrees Board but normally one (**1**) copy shall be retained in the University's Learning Resources Centre.

11 Office of the Independent Adjudicator

Having exhausted the University internal procedures and subject to the provisions of legislation, the candidate has the right to request the Office of the Independent Adjudicator to review their case.

Sharon Harrison-Barker
Secretary and Registrar
Signed: **1 August 2025**

Alternative format

If you need this document in an alternative format, please email us at governanceservices@herts.ac.uk or telephone us on +44 (0)1707 28 6006.