# Notes of Guidance

# Applying for Higher Doctorates (DCL, DD, DLitt, DMus, DSc)

**Key information**

Higher doctorates are earned awards of the University whose fundamental purpose is to recognise excellence in academic scholarship.

Please read these notes of guidance before and in conjunction with the application form to supplicate (apply for) for one of the higher doctorates.

* It is strongly recommended that you consult the [Submissions and Research Degrees Team](mailto:higherdoctorates@admin.ox.ac.uk?subject=Higher%20Doctorates%20Enquiry) prior to submitting a formal application to supplicate for one of the higher doctorates.
* A fee of £2,760 will be payable upon submission of an application, of which £276 is non- refundable should you not progress to full scrutiny after initial screening.

**Eligibility**

Applications for one of the higher doctorates will be accepted from current members of Congregation or from graduates of the University.

Graduates of the Universities of Cambridge and Dublin who have been incorporated in this University are **not** eligible to supplicate for a Higher Doctorate unless they are also a current member of Congregation or a graduate of the University.

**Application**

Applications can be submitted on an open basis; additionally departments, faculties and colleges may wish to invite an application from a specific candidate. An invitation to apply does not in itself constitute proof that the work of the candidate is of sufficient significance to merit the award of the degree concerned. This remains a judgement of the responsible body on the recommendation of its judges. For an indication of the academic standard required for one of the higher doctorates, please refer to the examination regulations for Higher Doctorates and to the local guidance prepared by the relevant responsible body.

Applications to supplicate shall be made to one of the following responsible bodies only:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Award** | **Division** | **Board (Faculty/Division)** |
| Doctor of Letters (DLitt) | Humanities | Classics  English Language and Literature  Fine Art  History  Linguistics, Philology and Phonetics  Medieval and Modern Languages and Literature  Music  Oriental Studies  Philosophy  Theology and Religion |
| Social Sciences | Social Sciences |
| Doctor of Science (DSc) | Social Sciences | Social Sciences |
| MPLS | Mathematical, Physical and Life Sciences |
| MSD | Medical Sciences |
| Doctor of Music (DMus) | Humanities | Music |
| Doctor of Divinity (DD) | Humanities | Theology and Religion |
| Doctor of Civil Law (DCL) | Social Sciences | Law |

Applications from the Department for Continuing Education will be considered by the relevant cognate area in one of the four divisions. Candidates applying under the auspices of the Department for Continuing Education should contact the [Submissions and Research Degrees Team](mailto:higherdoctorates@admin.ox.ac.uk?subject=Higher%20Doctorates%20Enquiry) ([higherdoctorates@admin.ox.ac.uk](mailto:higherdoctorates@admin.ox.ac.uk)) for confirmation as to which division will consider their application.

***Application cycle***

Applications will be considered by the University on a cyclical basis.

The application window will open 1August each year and applications should be submitted using the **online application form** no later than midnight 31 August. Candidates should be aware that the processing of applications will normally be subject to the following timetable:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Activity** | **Due by (Academic Year in which application is made)** |
| Candidate submit application for screening | 31st August |
| Division undertakes screening | End Week 3 Michaelmas Term |
| Candidate notified of outcome of screening | End Week 4 Michaelmas Term |
| Candidate submits full submission | End Week 8 Michaelmas Term |
| Submission sent to judges | End Week 0 Hilary Term |
| Judges send recommendation | End Week 11 Hilary Term |
| Responsible body consider judges recommendations | End Week 9 Trinity Term |
| Candidates notified of outcome | End Week 10 Trinity Term |

***Initial application***

An initial application submitted for screening will consist of:

* an application form
* proof of payment of the application fee
* a document of no more than 10 sides of A4 (minimum 11pt, single spaced) to include a statement of how the candidate meets the criteria for the award
* a pdf copy of the candidate’s CV
* a list of key / representative publications as stipulated by the relevant local guidance;
* a list of any individuals the candidate would like to see excluded from the pool of judges on grounds of conflict of interest, with grounds to be explained. Please note, however, that the relevant responsible body reserves the right to appoint any judge that they see as being the most appropriate person to judge a candidate’s work.

For all higher doctorates, any work previously submitted for other degrees is excluded from consideration. Additionally, at least one year must have elapsed between the publication of any published paper or book and its submission as evidence in support of an application. For work produced in collaboration, a candidate must state in respect of each item the extent of their own contribution.

***Screening process***

Initial applications will be subject to a screening process to establish if there is a *prima facie* case for the candidate to be considered for the degree. The nature of the screening process is detailed in the local guidance prepared by the relevant responsible body.

Should the responsible body conclude that there is not a *prima facie* case for consideration, the candidate will be notified by the Submissions and Research Degrees Team. A fee of £276 will be retained by the University and the remainder of the application fee will be returned to the candidate (£2,484).

There is no right of appeal in relation to a screening decision, although unsuccessful candidates may re-apply at the next available opportunity.

Candidates invited to proceed to full scrutiny will be notified by the Submissions and Research Degrees Team.

***Full application***

Details of the nature of the submission required for a full application, in terms of the extent and form of publications as appropriate to the conventions of the field, will be determined by the responsible bodies and form part of the local guidance which is available to candidates. If/when judges are appointed, the candidate will be informed and shall then provide two copies of the publications listed in their initial application (either in hard copy or electronically), and a full list of all their publications to the Submissions and Research Degrees Team. Hard copies should be sent to the *Submissions and Research Degrees Team, c/o The Examination Schools, 75-81 High Street, Oxford, OX1 4BG.* The previously submitted application form, covering statement, CV, and the key/representative publications list (with their explanation statements), provided at the screening stage will also be used at this point.

***Appointment of judges***

Once a *prima facie* case for the candidate to be considered for the degree has been established, the Submissions and Research Degrees Team will liaise with the Head of Department in whose remit the research submission lies to recommend judges to act on behalf of the responsible body. Nominated judges will be approached during Michaelmas term whilst the candidate prepares their full application. Two judges will be appointed to consider the evidence submitted.

For applications from current members of Congregation, both judges shall be external to the University. For other applications one internal and one external judge may be appointed, or two external judges if an internal judge is not available. The identity of the judges will not be divulged to the candidate at any time.

Prior to appointment judges approached will be required to declare any conflicts of interest that they hold with the candidate. Judges will not be appointed to judge submissions for candidates with whom they have a conflict of interest. For the purposes of judging a submission for a Higher Doctorate, a conflict of interest is defined as follows:

* a close professional, contractual or personal relationship with the candidate or who has a financial interest in the research of the candidate[[1]](#footnote-1)
* anyone who is already, or knows they will be, in a position to significantly influence the future of the candidate: e.g. on an appointment panel for a post for which the candidate has applied
* anyone significantly involved in recent or current collaborative research activities with the candidate
* an external judge cannot be a member of a governing body or committee of the University or currently employed by, or taking up a position during the course of judging a submission at the University
* the appointment of both external judges from the same department of the same institution.

Additionally, if within the last three years:

* the judge supervised or had line management responsibility for the candidate
* the external judge was a member of staff or student of the University.

Furthermore, if a judge is aware of any other circumstance that presents a potential conflict of interest with a candidate, they should raise this with the responsible body who will decide if an alternative judge should be appointed.

Should it not be possible to engage judges before the beginning of Hilary Term in the relevant academic year, the responsible body may decline to consider the full application. In such circumstances the full application fee will be refunded to the candidate. Any delay in appointing judges will be notified to candidates together with a revised timetable for judging the submission by the Submissions and Research Degrees Team.

***Judgement***

The appointed judges will each produce an independent report assessing whether the candidate’s submission has met the award criteria. The reports and recommendation will be received and considered by the relevant responsible body.

In the event that the two judges’ reports are in conflict, a third judge will be appointed to review the submission without knowledge of the previous judgements. This third judge shall be external to the University and will not be appointed to judge submissions for candidates with whom they have a conflict of interest as defined above.

Candidates will be advised that there has been a delay in receiving the judges’ reports on their submission and a revised timetable for the outcome of the submission will be provided to the candidate by the Submissions and Research Degrees Team. It will normally be expected that the third judge will review the submission over the Long Vacation with the relevant responsible body receiving the report in Michaelmas Term.

***Outcome***

If the judges decide that the candidate’s submission merits the awarding of a Higher Doctorate, and this is endorsed at a meeting of the relevant responsible body, the candidate will be granted leave to supplicate for one of the higher doctorates. Success will be notified to the candidate by the Submissions and Research Degrees Team. The relevant responsible body will receive a copy of the result letter.

The decision of the responsible body will also be published in the University Gazette, the University Calendar and on the University website. One copy of each of the papers and books submitted as evidence will remain in the possession of the University for deposit in the Bodleian Library, unless the Library already possesses a copy.

If the judges decide that the candidate’s submission does not merit the awarding of a Higher Doctorate, and this is endorsed at a meeting of the relevant responsible body, the candidate will not be granted leave to supplicate for one of the higher doctorates. The outcome will be communicated to the candidate by the Submissions and Research Degrees Team. Unsuccessful candidates may re-apply at the next available opportunity.

Whether the outcome of the application is positive or negative, all candidates will receive anonymised copies of the judges’ reports for feedback purposes.

***Reapplication***

Candidates not invited to full scrutiny following the screening process, and those whose full submission did not merit the awarding of a Higher Doctorate, are eligible to re-apply at the next available opportunity.

Candidates wishing to make a reapplication should take into consideration any feedback that they received at either the screening or judging phases to inform their reapplication. The same screening panel and judges may be used to assess a reapplication, particularly in narrow academic fields. Copies of previous judges’ reports will not be made available to either the screening panel or judges.

***Appeals***

An unsuccessful candidate may appeal against the decision of the responsible body to Education Committee. Education Committee will only consider complaints on the grounds of procedural irregularity in the decision-making process and not appeals against academic judgement.

Formal appeals should be submitted to the Chair of Education Committee at the following address:

Education Policy Support

University Offices

Wellington Square

Oxford

OX1 2JD

[edcapplications@admin.ox.ac.uk](mailto:edcapplications@admin.ox.ac.uk)

1. Relationships in this category will be on a spectrum such that responsible bodies may exercise an element of discretion and consider carefully whether the relationship presents a potential risk of perceived or actual bias. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)