



University of  
St Andrews

## Higher degrees

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<b>Purpose</b>	This policy describes the criteria, eligibility, application process and appeal procedure for awarding Higher Degrees, including DLitt, DSc and MD by Portfolio.

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1.4	Updated to include Doctor of Divinity	Approved	Emily Feamster, Deputy Head of Education Policy and Quality	16/05/2024

# UNIVERSITY OF ST ANDREWS

## POLICY ON HIGHER DEGREES

### 1. Award Criteria

Higher degrees (DLitt, DSc, M.D.<sup>1</sup>, or D.D.) may be awarded in recognition of a corpus of work of a professorial standard attained over an extended period of no fewer than ten years, containing original and significant contributions to the advancement of knowledge and learning which has given the candidate international distinction in their particular academic field.

### 2. Eligibility

Graduates of the University of St Andrews are eligible for consideration as a candidate for a higher degree no fewer than ten years after the date of their doctorate or other recognised terminal degree.

Graduates of other universities who are presently full or part-time members of staff, or retired or emeritus staff whose final employment was at the University of St Andrews and who currently hold an emeritus or honorary academic position are eligible for consideration as a candidate for a higher degree, provided it is at least ten years after the date of their doctorate or other recognised terminal degree from any university.

### 3. Application Process

1. The Master's Office will consider nominations from the Schools for higher degree candidates on a biannual basis. Nominations should be submitted by the Head of School, who will consult with the senior members of the School before making the nomination. Each nomination must include:
  - a. A statement of no more than 1000 words explaining how the proposed submission meets the award criteria.
  - b. A copy of the applicant's CV, including a list of all publications.
  - c. A list, provided by the School, of at least four possible external examiners and two confirmed internal examiners.
2. The Master's Office will review nominations and invite candidates of suitable merit to apply for the relevant higher degree. The evaluation process is normally led by the relevant Faculty Dean. While the Master's Office will work with the nominating School such that both parties agree, where possible, about the candidate's suitability for examination, the relevant Faculty Dean or the Master (if acting directly) reserves the right to decline a nomination put forward by a School.
3. The Master's Office will inform the applicant if formal submission is to be allowed, enclosing the appropriate regulations, and explaining the preliminary procedure for submitting a (composite) thesis of no more than 120,000 words, or a portfolio of similar size, which may include papers, books (or sample chapter(s) therefrom) and other publications that are suitably representative of the applicant's work. Items (a) and (b) detailed in (1) above will also be included for consideration by the examining committee. Applicants are encouraged to submit an electronic version of the portfolio. If it is not possible to submit all materials electronically, the applicant must submit FOUR typescript

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<sup>1</sup> There are two routes to the award of MD, the second is considered via the normal postgraduate admissions processes and involves a minimum of two years' research within the University.

copies of the material in secure but temporary bindings. All [requisite fees](#) must be paid before the portfolio is distributed to examiners.

Applicants must submit their portfolio within six months of formal invitation. Invitations will lapse after six months and individuals who fail to submit their portfolio within this window will be asked to reapply before being allowed to submit.

4. The Master's Office will select two external examiners from the list supplied by the School and confirm that the two nominated internal examiners are appropriate. At least one of the internal examiners should be of professorial standing, or recognised equivalent, and will serve as the convenor of the examining committee. External examiners should be of professorial standing.
5. The Master's Office will write formally to all the examiners and will provide copies of the submission for examination, the current Regulations, and information regarding payment of fees to external examiners.
6. Within 8 weeks, the examiners shall submit independent written reports to the convenor without conferring on the submission. Such reports shall provide (i) a recommendation of whether the degree be awarded or not, and (ii) a brief summary of each examiner's rationale for arriving at their decision.
7. The decisions which may be reached by the examining committee are:
  - a. that the submission be approved and the degree be awarded.
  - b. that the submission be approved and the degree be awarded, subject to the making of minor corrections or revisions to elements of the composite thesis or portfolio that have not already been published.
  - c. that the submission be rejected and no award made.
8. The convenor of the examining committee will send all the reports, along with a summary report from the convenor, to the Master's Office for approval by the relevant Dean.<sup>2</sup>
9. The Master's Office will inform the candidate, as well as the examiners, of the confirmed examination result and arrange payment of the examiners' fees where appropriate.
10. If the candidate is successful following the completion of the examination process (including addressing any minor corrections, within 3 months, to the satisfaction of the convenor), the Master's Office will inform appropriate sections of Registry to facilitate registration for graduation and the conferral of the degree award.
11. If the candidate is unsuccessful following the completion of the examination process, they may reapply for reconsideration not less than 5 years after initial submission, supplying a revised submission clearly detailing any significant changes in their academic contribution and research output.
12. If the candidate is successful following the completion of the examination process, an electronic copy of the portfolio submission in an approved format(s) shall be deposited in the University Library. If it is not possible to provide an electronic copy, two hard copies of the submission shall be bound in an approved format(s) at the candidate's own expense and deposited in the University Library.
13. The candidate's award of the relevant higher degree will be reported for formal approval in Senate Graduation minutes.

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<sup>2</sup> In the case of a split decision by the examining committee, a Dean nominated by the Master will act as the deciding vote.

#### 4. Appeal Procedure

If, after the recommendation of the examining committee is approved and communicated, the candidate wishes to appeal against the examining committee's recommendation, they may request a review of this academic decision by submitting an appeal, in writing, to the Vice-Principal Education (Proctor). Any such appeal should be raised by candidates within 5 working days of the date of notification of the examining committee's recommendation. Guidance on the procedure to be followed, including permissible grounds of appeal, can be obtained from the Court and Senate Office.

<b>Version number</b>	<b>Purpose / changes</b>	<b>Document status</b>	<b>Author of changes, role and school / unit</b>	<b>Date</b>
1.1	Update to appeal procedure	Approved	-	June 2017
1.2	Update to transfer responsibility to the Master's office. Eligibility of Emeritus and retired academic staff permitted.	Approved	Emily Feamster, Academic Policy Officer, Proctor's Office	
1.3	Periodic policy review. No changes made	Approved	Emily Feamster, Deputy Head of Education Policy and Quality	2 May 2023
1.4	Updated to include Doctor of Divinity	Approved	Emily Feamster, Deputy Head of Education Policy and Quality	16/05/2024