

14C REGULATIONS AND GUIDANCE FOR HIGHER DOCTORATES

Awards

14c.1 The following Higher Doctorates may be awarded by the university:

- Doctor of Letters (DLitt)
- Doctor of Science (DSc)
- Doctor of Divinity (DD)
- Doctor of Technology (DTech)
- Doctor of Engineering (DEng)
- Doctor of Education (DEd)
- Doctor of Social Science (DSocSc)
- Doctor of Arts (DArts)

Eligibility

14c.2 Candidates must be either or both of the following:

- a current member of staff at any academic partner or the executive office associated with UHI – they must have been in post for a minimum of three years at the time of application
- former UHI staff, providing their previous office in UHI totalled at least three years.

14c.3 A Higher Doctorate will be awarded to applicants who demonstrate:

- command over a particular field of study and a significant contribution to understanding and the advancement of knowledge within that field over an extended period and at the highest academic standard of contribution
- that the research has been carried out over a sustained period of time and led to examples of original, published work of distinction in high impact journals or other material of distinction across that period
- that the candidate is a leading (international) authority in the field of study
- relevant examples of the impact, influence and significance of their contribution in academic terms and/or in broader contribution to society.

Application for candidature

Notification

14c.4 Before making a formal application for an award of a Higher Doctorate, prospective candidates are advised to seek the advice of the Dean of Research. If they are advised not to proceed to *prima facie* submission as a result of the preliminary consideration, they will be advised accordingly, but may still choose to continue to make a submission if they wish to do so.

14c.5 The timetable for application is as follows:

Application process	Deadline
Application deadline	30 September
Panel considers applications and notifies candidates	31 October
Applicant prepares full submission	November-March

Academic Standards and Quality Regulations 2026-27
Postgraduate regulations

Application process	Deadline
Examiners review submission and submit recommendation report or request viva examination	April-May
Graduate School arranges viva examination where applicable	June
Viva examination takes place (if requested by examiners)	July-August
Examiners provide recommendation report once viva has taken place	August-September
Outcome reported to candidate, depending on whether or not a viva examination has taken place	July-October

Table 1: Higher doctorates application timetable

Preliminary submission for *prima facie* assessment

- 14c.6 Complete initial submission form (in English or English and Gaelic*) and submit to gradresearch@uhi.ac.uk by 30 September, with the following attachments:
- The work for consideration: applicants have discretion to select outputs from their corpus of publications and/or other outputs that best represent the significance of their academic contribution to their chosen field according to the criteria above and to list these accordingly. This should be accompanied by a contextualising statement of 1000-2000 words, summarising the primary basis of their case for the Higher Doctorate award. The outputs selected should ideally cover an appropriate timespan but will not ordinarily include all outputs produced. Outputs will be assessed on the basis of their quality, contribution and impact, which should be of the highest order, and not on quantity
 - An abbreviated CV which summarises academic work, including a list of all published works, which can include weblinks if appropriate.
- 14c.7 A panel consisting of the Dean of Research, a representative from the candidate's academic partner (or from another academic partner where necessary) and an individual with expertise in the relevant area from the appropriate research cluster will consider each application and will recommend the application to move forward to examination if the application meets the criteria as outlined above. This will normally be communicated back to the applicant within four weeks following the deadline for submission.
- 14c.8 In the event that an initial application is unsuccessful, that is that the work and evidence submitted does not in principle meet the criteria, the candidate will not be able to register for the degree. In this event a candidate may reapply after a period of not less than three years from first submission.

Submission of work for a Higher Doctorate

- 14c.9 If the application is endorsed for examination the candidate will then have up to a further six months to prepare their corpus submission for consideration by the examiners. This should

* Submission of the initial application should be in English or English and Gaelic, to allow provisional assessment by individuals who may not be Gaelic speakers. However, the full application may be presented in Gaelic alone or Gaelic and English in relevant cases, if a request to do so is included in the initial submission form.

Academic Standards and Quality Regulations 2026-27
Postgraduate regulations

be submitted in electronic format and should include the portfolio of publications being submitted for the award, together with:

- a. summary of contents
- b. detailed commentary on the candidate's view of the significance of the work (between 10,000-30,000 words); if the submission is in Gaelic there can be a 20% increase on this word limit
- c. an abbreviated CV which summarises academic work and contributions
- d. full statement on the extent of the contributions of all other persons where some or all of the items submitted are collaborative
- e. statement by the candidate as to whether the work(s) or any part thereof has been submitted, successfully or unsuccessfully, for an award of this or any other university. Please note that work that has been presented previously as part of the thesis or dissertation for a taught or research degree will not be considered for the award but can be included for a complete representation of research.

- 14c.10 The portfolio of publications submission may take the form of, for example, books, contributions to journals, patent specifications, reports, creative work and designs, and it may also include other evidence of original work.
- 14c.11 The contents of a submission must be in the English language except where it has been agreed that the full application may be submitted in Gaelic or Gaelic and English, as stated on the preliminary submission (see 14c.6).
- 14c.12 Minimum registration period will be 12 months and maximum registration period will be 24 months.
- 14c.13 The candidate will be invoiced [a fee](#) by UHI to cover examiner and administrative costs. If financial cost is an issue, please discuss with the Dean of Research.

Assessment and examination

- 14c.14 Two external examiners will normally be appointed, via an examiners nomination form, sent to gradresearch@uhi.ac.uk. The candidate should suggest 2-3 external examiners for the lead of the appropriate research cluster to submit on the nomination form. The research cluster lead should provide a further 2-3 external examiner nominations and these can be recommendations from suggested examiners. At least five nominations will then be considered by the panel who considered the *prima facie* submission and examiners selected either from those nominated or in some cases other examiners may be appointed.
- 14c.15 Examiners will have two months to review the submission and to each provide a report with the recommendation that the degree be awarded or not awarded, with no classification or distinctions, but including a rationale for the recommendation. This report will be submitted on an examiner's report form.
- 14c.16 The examiners may request a viva, in which case an internal assessor will be appointed. The internal assessor should be as close to the academic area of the submission as possible, and they will chair the viva. This may take place by VC if travel costs are prohibitive, not least where international-based experts are involved or for other reasons. Relevant travel expenses will be reimbursed if there is a requirement to travel to the viva. Following review

Academic Standards and Quality Regulations 2026-27
Postgraduate regulations

of the submission and the viva, a further 1-2 months can be taken to provide the recommendation report as per above.

- 14c.17 These recommendations will be considered by Research Degrees Committee (RDC) and Academic Council for ratification. The RDC chair will take action to inform the candidate of the outcome of RDC's decision (which will be pending formal approval by Academic Council) and publicise as required thereafter. Where examiners cannot reach a joint recommendation, they should submit individual recommendations. A further external examiner shall be appointed, and they shall be given access to the original reports and make a final recommendation.

Resubmission

- 14c.18 Resubmission for a Higher Doctorate would be considered providing that a minimum of three years has elapsed since the first application and that the new submission contains significant new material.

Award

- 14c.19 Awardees will be able to attend their academic partner graduation ceremony.
- 14c.20 Awardees of Higher Doctorates will be invited to provide a keynote presentation at the UHI Research Conference or similar event.

Appeals and academic misconduct

- 14c.21 Academic appeals will only be considered on matters of procedural irregularity. Those involved in considering academic appeals will not review the question of academic judgement.