



**UNIVERSITY OF
CAMBRIDGE**

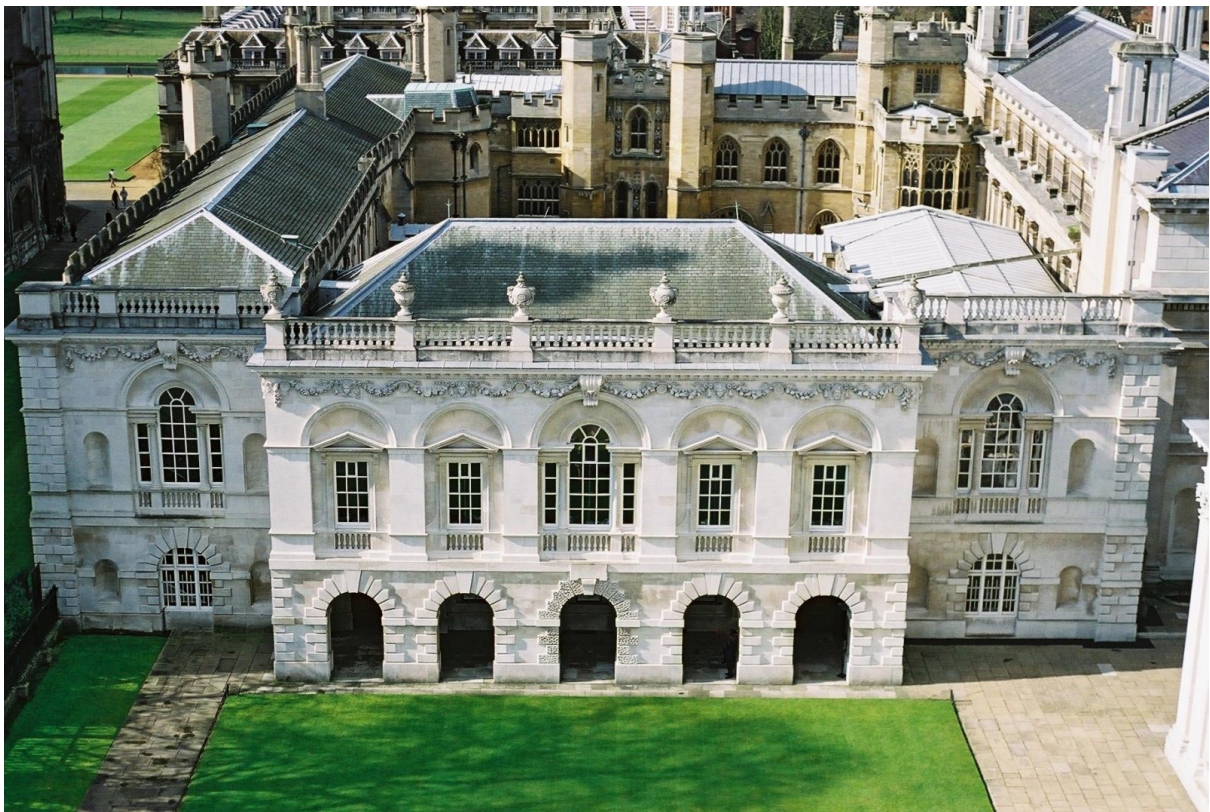
School of Clinical Medicine

Doctor of Medicine

by

Special Regulations

Guide for Current Candidates



April 2022

Your status in the University

In doing the MD by Special Regulations, you do **not** become a *registered student* of the University and therefore are not eligible to use University resources other than those available to you as an alumnus. Specifically, you are *not* eligible to apply for remote online access to journals held at the University Library. Candidates should instead ensure that their own research institution provides the necessary research facilities.

The College at which you matriculated for your primary degree will become the College that will present you for conferment of your MD degree.

Supervision

At the time of application you were required to identify a specific adviser/supervisor at the time of developing the proposal. The adviser agreed to be involved in the work throughout, including planning of studies, advice on problems in data collection, methods of data analysis, advice on the writing of the thesis and reading drafts.

The MD Committee recommends regular monthly meeting with the supervisor to keep the research on track and monitor progress.

Thesis Submission

Standard required

The thesis should consist of original work, carried out by the candidate, and set in the context of previous work in the field. The standard expected is that of a PhD. It should be specially composed and *must give evidence of independent research, observation and reflection*. New discoveries in medicine are not essential, but the substance of the thesis must consist of the candidate's own analysis, observations and experiments.

Compilations from the work of others cannot be accepted. There is no objection to incorporation and use within the thesis of results of work already published by the candidate, provided that full reference is given and reprints supplied if possible.

Statistical advice

Statistical planning by candidates is frequently inadequate. The MD Committee advises candidates to seek expert advice before they embark on their experiments. It is important for candidates to be able to defend the statistical treatment of data in the face of questioning by examiners at the Act

Presentation of original data

Sufficient original data should be incorporated into the thesis for the examiners to be able to gain a clear idea of what original observations and measurements were made in the work. If necessary, numerical data may be put into an appendix. Although it may be difficult to condense large amounts of data into the text or an appendix, the material given should be detailed enough to enable examiners and others to follow the working out of results from the raw data, and to understand how the conclusions were arrived at. Detailed specimen calculations may be necessary. It is not acceptable, for example, to refer to a statistical computer program without describing the statistical methods used.

Deadline for submission

The thesis must be submitted **within 6 years** of being granted approval to proceed, unless given special permission by the Degree Committee (paragraph 8 of the Regulations), on the recommendation of the MD Committee, to delay submission until a later date. It is essential that the work, on submission, is interpreted in the light of the latest developments in the field and that the reference list contains the most recently published work.

Format

While not seeking to impose rigid limits, the MD Committee advises candidates that theses should not normally exceed 60,000 words (excluding references, captions and notes), and that many excellent theses are much shorter than this.

It is suggested that the thesis should follow the usual format:

- Short summary/abstract
- Table of contents
- List of abbreviations used
- Acknowledgements
- Introduction – to include a statement of the object of the research and a critical review of earlier work on the subject.
- Methods – these need description once only and should not appear in the legends of figures and tables. Sufficient detail should be given to allow the work to be repeated by others. Pertinent details of apparatus and equipment should be given where appropriate, in addition to the maker's name and the country of origin of equipment.
- Results
- Discussion
- Conclusion
- References – candidates should use either the Harvard (author-date) or Vancouver (reference by number) system of referencing. The system used must be consistent throughout. Candidates are referred to *The Cambridge Handbook of Copy-editing*, Cambridge University Press. All quoted papers should have been read in the original. If this has been impracticable owing to language difficulties or inaccessibility, a note of this should be added to the reference in the bibliography.
- Appendices – large numbers of observations of individual results are best presented in an appendix.

In a separate appendix candidates must state, with details, the following:

- (i) whether the work was carried out in an institution such as a hospital or university department, a laboratory or in general practice;
- (ii) how much of the work was done personally or with the help of others (specify the nature of any help);

- (iii) if the work was not entirely independent, under whose supervision or with whose collaboration it was done;
- (iv) whether any of the work referred to in the thesis has been published previously by the candidate; if so, please supply a list of the papers concerned and, if possible, supply reprints;
- (v) details of submission to, and approval from, an Ethical Committee (where appropriate); and a statement that human experiments were performed with the understanding and consent of each subject.

Ethical considerations

The MD Committee wishes to remind candidates that the design and conduct of research work proposed for the MD degree should conform to high standards of medical ethics. It is advisable to seek the approval of a local ethics committee where appropriate.

Animal experiments: candidates must provide a full description of their anaesthetic and surgical procedures. They must also provide evidence that they took adequate steps to ensure that animals did not suffer unnecessarily at any stage of the experiments.

Human experiments: theses describing experiments on human subjects involving procedures that are not therapeutic and carry a significant risk of harm must include (in an appendix) a statement that the experiments were performed with the understanding and consent of each subject. We draw candidates' attention to the code of ethics of the World Medical Association (Declaration of Helsinki).

The MD Committee reserves the right to make a judgement on the ethical propriety of studies.

Submission of the thesis

Your thesis should be submitted electronically to md-admin@medschl.cam.ac.uk
Hardbound copies will be required later – see below.

Your thesis must include the following:

1. A title page displaying
 - the full title of the thesis;
 - your full name (as it appears on your passport);
 - the date of your submission (month and year);
 - a declaration stating: *This thesis is submitted for the degree of Doctor of Medicine.*
2. A signed declaration in the preface stating:

This thesis is the result of my own work and includes nothing which is the outcome of work done in collaboration except as declared in the Preface and specified in the text.

It is not substantially the same as any that I have submitted, or is being concurrently submitted for a degree or diploma or other qualification at the University of Cambridge or any other University or similar institution except as declared in the Preface and

specified in the text. I further state that no substantial part of my thesis has already been submitted, or is being concurrently submitted, for any such degree, diploma or other qualification at the University of Cambridge or any other University of similar institution except as declared in the Preface and specified in the text.

It does not exceed the prescribed word limit of 60,000 words.

Examination procedure

In the first instance, the Degree Committee will refer each thesis to be examined to the MD Committee, who may refer it to one or more referees for their opinion and advice before deciding whether the thesis constitutes *prima facie* a qualification for the MD degree.

If, based on this advice, the Degree Committee decides that the work **does not** constitute *prima facie* a qualification for the degree, no Examiners will be appointed, and a resolution of the Degree Committee to that effect, with the names of those present and voting on either side, shall be sent to the Student Registry, which shall communicate the decision to the candidate.

If the advice is that the work **does** constitute *prima facie* a qualification for the degree, the work will be sent to two Examiners, one internal to the University, and one external, appointed by the Degree Committee on the recommendation of the MD Committee. Each Examiner will make an independent report to the Degree Committee on the thesis. If the Examiners do not agree in their recommendations or if for any other reason the Degree Committee, or the Student Registry, need a further opinion or opinions on the merit of the work submitted, the Degree Committee may appoint an additional Examiner or additional Examiners. You will be informed who your examiners are when you are sent details of the arrangements for the Act (viva).

The Act (viva voce examination)

The examination is completed by “the Act” – an oral examination on the thesis and the general field of knowledge within which it falls. This is normally held in Cambridge at the Clinical School. It is conducted by the two Examiners appointed by the Degree Committee and chaired by the Assessor (or a Deputy if necessary). The Chair will report to the MD Committee on the outcome of the Act.

The Examiners jointly examine the candidate *viva voce* on questions connected with the work submitted as well as on other medical subjects and sign a joint certificate of the result. If the Examiners do not agree in their recommendations or if for any other reason the Degree Committee or the Board need a further opinion or opinions on the merit of the work submitted, the Degree Committee may appoint an additional Examiner or additional Examiners.

The Degree Committee will consider your Examiners’ reports and, if they are satisfied that the work you submitted and your performance in the Act are of the requisite standard for the degree, you will be notified accordingly by the Student Registry. It is normal for this to be conditional on completion of minor or more substantial corrections. If you have not reached the required standard the Degree Committee may permit you to submit a revised thesis.

Corrections following the Act

The Student Registry will give you a **maximum of 12 months** to complete any corrections following the Act and to submit your corrected thesis for approval. Unless there are clear mitigating circumstances, candidates failing to meet this requirement will not be permitted to submit thereafter or be approved for the degree. Where only minor corrections are required, it is expected that candidates will aim to have these completed **within 3 months** if possible. For those candidates who are required to undertake further data collection or experimental work, or to make very substantial changes to the text, the completion time will be determined by the Degree Committee on an individual basis and communicated to the Student Registry.

Hardbound corrected thesis

Before the degree can finally be approved, you are required to submit two hardbound copies of the corrected thesis to the Student Registry for deposition in the University and Medical Libraries.

Final approval of the award of the degree, when all conditions have been met, is made by the Student Registry from whom you will receive a letter explaining how you should contact the Praelector of the College of your primary degree about the conferral of your MD.

Presentation of thesis: please see [Submitting your hardbound thesis \(final thesis submission\) | Cambridge students](#) for instructions.

The two bound copies should be sent or delivered to the Student Registry, Student Services Centre, New Museums Site, Cambridge, CB2 3PT

Please note that it is **NOT** necessary for you to upload an electronic version of your thesis into the University repository.

The Postgraduate Education and Clinical Academic Training Section

PECATS is administrative support for the MD degree.

Secretary to the MD Committee is Ms Jane Muir

md-admin@medschl.cam.ac.uk

Data Protection – How we use your personal information

Go to this link for all you need to know about Data Protection

<https://www.information-compliance.admin.cam.ac.uk/data-protection/student-data>