

Transcript: Jon Blount on examiners' reports

Edward Mills

And obviously the first step, I imagine, of defending the thesis comes in the form of the examiners producing these reports on what you as a candidate have written. Could you say a bit more about what goes into these reports at all?

Jon Blount

Yes. So that the preliminary reports are written independently by each individual examiner, and they will give an abridged version of their overall comments that they've already written up in note form or in longhand. You know, they would just give a sort of a sense of where they of what they feel the likely outcome will be on the basis of the thesis that they've read. They will give a tentative recommendation at the end: 'I think this is I think this is worthy of the award of PhD, subject to perhaps some revisions in the areas that I've outlined above', that's the kind of the way that that report typically ends. And then then examiners share those reports with each other, usually the day before the exam, just so they're aware of the gist of what each other's feelings are. It's useful to have that for context. But you wouldn't modify those reports at that stage, even if you identified differences in your views, that's quite normal. But then, you know, after the viva has taken place, the examiners would then get together (virtually, in the current circumstances, or physically, they would get together in a room) and they would draw up a report, a joint report where they make their recommendation: 'this should be awarded, you know, subject to revisions' or whatever the recommendation is. They'll state, what their recommendation is, and then if there are revisions required, they'll list them. That's that's the function of the final report.