

IRRV Honours Qualification 2024

IRRV Honours Qualification: Guidance and Regulations



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1. Introduction

The IRRV Honours scheme is for members who wish to continue their studies, those holding a senior position or employees of Governments (UK and devolved), their agencies and other public funded bodies, who wish to reach the highest professional level. Successful candidates will be able to use the designation IRRV (Hons).

2. Candidate Eligibility

2.1 There are three routes to achieving Honours Membership:

- Members who have successfully completed the IRRV Diploma.
- Persons on the basis of their occupational 'seniority' (i.e. Head of Service or Senior Manager, working within the profession).
- Employees of Governments (UK and devolved), their agencies and other public funded bodies with at least 5 years' experience in the profession and who have attained the required level of education, knowledge and expertise.

2.2 A candidate must be a member of the Institute, whilst working towards the Honours Qualification.

3. Summary of Scheme

3.1 There are two parts to the Honours qualification:

- Dissertation of between 14,500 to 15,000 words (See **Appendix A** for details).
- Viva Voce (oral examination before a panel) up to 1 hour (See **Appendix B** for details).

4. Timetable

There are two annual cycles:

	CYCLE 1	CYCLE 2
Submission and return of proposal	1st January – 31st March	1st July – 30th September
Submission date for completed dissertation	30th June	31st December
Viva Voce	August / September	February / March

5. Results

- 5.1 Candidates will be notified of the final result within four weeks of the viva voce taking place. All results will be ratified by the Qualifications Management Board (QMB), following receipt of the panel's recommendation.
- 5.2 Results may be Distinction (75%), Pass (50%), Fail, Referred or Invitation to Re-submit:
- **Fail:** The required standard for the dissertation and the viva has not been met. The candidate would need to re-submit a new proposal, in accordance with the Honours timetable, and pay the full fee again.
 - **Referred:** The candidate has not yet reached a Pass standard, but further work on the dissertation may bring it up to standard. Some feedback will be provided. A further viva may or may not be required. No additional fee will be payable.
 - **Invitation to Re-submit:** While some aspects of the dissertation may be acceptable, additional work is required, and parts of the dissertation may need to be discarded. Some feedback will be provided, and a further viva will be required. An additional fee will be payable.

6. Appeals

- 6.1 An appeal against a Fail may be lodged, following receipt of Assessor and viva panel feedback. Candidates should provide a statement, giving their reasons for the appeal. The dissertation and viva record will then be re-assessed by an Appeal Panel, comprising up to three members of the QMB, who were unconnected with the original assessment. On receipt of the Appeal Panel's report, the QMB will determine the appeal. Their decision is final.
- 6.2 An appeal fee will be payable; refundable in the event of a change to the original result.

7. Fees

- 7.1 The current Honours fee (2024) is £500 + VAT.
- 7.2 The current fee for resubmission of a dissertation following an Invitation to re-submit is £110 + VAT.
- 7.3 Appeals fee is £70.00 + VAT.
- 7.4 Membership fees can be found at:
<https://www.irrv.net/homenew/item.php?iid=26835&wid=6&did=18>.

8. Further Information

Further information and application forms are available from the Institute. Please contact:

Vaishali Patel, Education Officer
Email: vaishali.patel@irrv.org.uk
Telephone: 020 7691 8995

Appendix A – Dissertation

Subject

The subject of the dissertation will be agreed between the candidate and an Assessor appointed by the Institute. The subject must be drawn from an area of study that is directly relevant to the candidate's professional work. However, it is not expected that the approach will be narrowly focused. The study should range beyond the immediate work environment and may take in the broader social, political and historical context.

The candidate must provide a written proposal of up to 500 words in advance of embarking on the dissertation. In their proposal, candidates are expected to set out clearly:

- The subject of their proposed dissertation.
- Their reasons for selecting the subject.
- An outline of their proposed approach to preparing their dissertation.
- Details of their proposed research strategy and methodology.
- An outline of how they expect their findings and conclusions will be capable of practical application.

A proposal that is not initially accepted will be returned with feedback from the Assessor, and may be re-submitted. At the Institute's discretion, a certain amount of negotiation may be entered into as to the content of the final proposal.

Content

As a general guide, a dissertation should include:

- Original research.
- Reference to existing research and a comprehensive literature search.
- Theoretical and / or historical and / or political study.
- A clear methodology.
- Evidence-based material.
- Personal reflection.
- Clear consideration of alternative approaches, arguments and courses of action.
- Conclusions which flow from the narrative of the dissertation.
- An element of practical application.

Mentoring

The candidate must seek the services of a mentor, who may be an IRRV Honours Member, or a senior workplace manager. If the candidate is unable to secure a mentor himself / herself, then the Institute will endeavour to assist in providing one. As much notice as possible should be given to the Institute, if a request for a mentor is to be made. The mentor will be subject to Institute approval.

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The role of the mentor is likely to be critical to the success or failure of the dissertation. The mentor should therefore be knowledgeable in the candidate's chosen subject area, and be aware of the assessment criteria to be applied to the dissertation.

Advice to Candidates

The following advice is given to candidates:

- It is worth investing considerable time on the project proposal. Once submitted for consideration, it may need to be re-submitted following advice from the Assessor. This process will improve your chances of final success.
- The project outline should be not too wide as to include everything; but wide enough to allow enough innovative research and new thinking.
- The project outline, once agreed, must be strictly adhered to.
- It is important that candidates research the chosen area and have a real sustainable interest in it.
- Research should adhere to the guidelines, be substantial and relate directly to the purpose and scope of the dissertation. Research over several areas, where a picture needs building or evidence is scant, is acceptable.
- Candidates would do well to consider some assistance with the drawing up of questionnaires for their research, to ensure that it is as successful as possible. They should consider a test pilot of surveys first, to ensure that there are no errors or ambiguity.
- Projects should have a practical aspect, and have the potential for useful implementation by employers. Employers are far more likely to be generous over time spent if it is a practical area. It is worth discussing project guidelines with line managers, and seeking their assistance.
- Although the nature of the dissertation is largely academic, there must be clear links to practical lessons or implications. Recommendations and results of applying theorem and models should be stated.
- A comprehensive literature search should be carried out in all cases, and a literature review included within the dissertation. In order to write the literature review, the candidate should investigate the sources available for the topic, list them, summarise briefly, and comment on their scope. The review should be organised into groups of related sources.
- The Harvard Referencing System must be used in dissertations and needs to be referenced to the text. Most university websites provide information on the system (e.g. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Parenthetical_referencing (click on Harvard Referencing Guide).)
- All direct quotations and indirect sources should be fully acknowledged (Harvard system). Direct quotations should not be of excessive length. If the candidate considers that it is essential to quote a document at length or in its entirety, or include large charts, tables, graphics etc., these may be placed in appendices. However, it may be sufficient to give a website reference for a document in the public domain, rather than reproduce it.
- The 114,500-15,000 word limit should be strictly adhered to. Titles, contents lists, footnotes, bibliography, appendices and the literature review are not part of the word count.

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- Candidates need to understand everything they put in their dissertation. It is very easy to upload a diagram or paragraph, which seems relevant but it might need explaining at the Viva.
- A good dissertation will take a considerable amount of time to produce. Candidates must allow for this.
- Candidates should meet regularly with their nominated mentor for progress meetings. Once the candidate has embarked on the dissertation, the mentor's role is to offer advice, but not to provide original ideas or information for the dissertation. The mentor should assist and advise the candidate in at least the following areas:
 - Adherence to the project proposal.
 - Appropriate scope and structure of the dissertation.
 - Soundness of research methodology, structuring of questionnaires etc.
 - Observance of assessment criteria, with particular regard to ensuring the advice to candidates has been followed in full.
 - Preparation for the viva.
- At least three substantial meetings between the candidate and the mentor, at two-monthly intervals, are recommended during the writing period.
- Around the half-way stage of the dissertation writing period, the Institute will contact candidates to ensure that they are making progress, are in regular touch with their mentor and keeping the assessment criteria in mind, and to check for any problems. If there are any issues of concern which arise either before or after this formal contact, candidates are encouraged to raise these with the Institute, at the earliest opportunity.

Presentation Requirements

Candidates are asked to provide an electronic copy and three hard copies of the completed dissertation. The hard copies will be for the purposes of the viva only.

The main requirements for dissertation presentation are:

- Single-sided pages – pages should be numbered.
- Standard office paper (i.e. 80 gsm is adequate).
- Arial 12 point font.
- Single line spacing – double line between paragraphs.
- Adequate margins on either side – about 3 cms.
- Bound copies: either flat-bound (i.e. pasted spine), or cone or spiral binding will be acceptable.
- The first page should be the Submission Sheet, which can be found at:
<https://www.irrv.net/homenew/item.php?iid=26123&wid=6&did=38>.

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- The text should be divided into chapters, to reflect the logical divisions of the dissertation; a contents list should be provided.
- A literature review should be included; preferably immediately after the contents page.
- No illustration or titling should be included for decorative purposes only; no credit will be given for this.

Submission of Dissertation

- The dissertation (together with the completed Submission Sheet) should be sent to the address below in a full size A4 envelope (the assignment should not be folded):

Institute of Revenues, Rating and Valuation
Attn:Chief Executive
Hayeswater
2 Westergreen Meadow
Braintree
Essex
CM7 1JN
- No covering letter is required. The dissertation should be sent by Special (not Recorded) Delivery; proof of posting should be retained. It is suggested the candidate retains a copy of their dissertation.
- In addition to sending the dissertation by post, an electronic copy of the completed dissertation (and completed submission sheet) must be sent by e-mail to Vaishali Patel at vaishali.patel@irrv.org.uk by the closing date. This should be submitted as a PDF.
- Late submission of dissertation will not be permitted, unless in exceptional circumstances. Any requests for an extension of the deadline should be submitted to Vaishali Patel at vaishali.patel@irrv.org.uk.

Assessment

Following the dissertation submission, it will be first-marked by the Assessor, to ascertain whether it is of sufficient standard to enable a viva voce to take place.

If it is of the appropriate standard, the time and place of the viva will be arranged. It should not be assumed that an invitation to attend a viva voce implies that a pass result will automatically follow; candidates will still have to justify and defend areas subjected to critical questioning from viva panel members.

If it is not of the required standard, it may be returned to the candidate for further work, with a view to making it suitable for the timetabled viva (some feedback will be given). Alternatively, it may be returned for major re-writing, with a view to consideration for a viva at the following round (feedback will be given); or it may be rejected, and the candidate will be required to submit a new dissertation.

Appendix B – Viva Voce

Following submission of the completed dissertation, which is considered to be of an adequate standard, candidates will be invited to attend a viva voce examination before a panel. The viva voce will take no longer than 1 hour.

When invited to a viva voce, candidates should note that they will be assessed on three criteria:

- Clear and concise oral presentation of the key points / highlights of the dissertation (candidates will be asked to give an oral summary of their submission, their reasons for selecting the topic and their approach to it. This should take no more than 15 minutes. It is not expected that a powerpoint presentation will be necessary.
- Ability to give informative responses to questions about the dissertation and enlarge on areas on request
- Ability to defend or justify any areas subjected to critical questioning

The panel will aim to ask searching questions about the dissertation topic and the candidate's method of working, without seeking to "trick" the candidate. With regard to the third criterion above, the examiners will welcome a robust defence of the dissertation, where appropriate, provided it can be justified by fact and substantiated argument.

Candidates may ask for time to reflect before answering a question, within reason, and should ask for clarification of any question where necessary.