



EXTERNAL EXAMINERS FOR RESEARCH DEGREES

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1 Appointment of Internal Examiners

- 1.1 No individual may simultaneously internally examine more than two MPhil/PhD candidates or two Research Degrees at the University.

Responsibilities of the First Supervisor

- 1.2 The nomination is presented to the Chair of the of the Research Degrees Sub-Committee, who will report all decisions on such appointments to the next meeting of the Committee.

2 External Examiners for Research degrees

- 2.1 The Research Degrees Sub-Committee shall review all nominations for External Examiners, in the light of criteria for appointment, and make recommendations to the Research Degrees External Examiner Appointments Panel for the appointment of External Examiners. It is a requirement of appointment that an External Examiner is competent to undertake the role in terms of academic or professional expertise, knowledge, and experience, and is able to command the respect of colleagues in the University and other higher education institutions and the wider research community.
- 2.2 The membership of the Research Degrees External Examiner Appointments Panel will comprise the Chair of the Education and Student Experience Committee, the Chair of the Research Degrees Sub Committee and the Head of the Graduate School.
- 2.3 The Research Degrees External Examiner Appointments Panel is responsible for reporting successful nominations to the Education and Student Experience Committee and the Academic Board, specifying those nominations that have been approved.
- 2.4 For Research Degree by Thesis, the first supervisor will complete an application on the Graduate School standard form and submit it together with the curriculum vitae of the nominee to the Head of the Graduate School, who will present it to the Chair of the Research Degrees Sub Committee, who is empowered to take Chair's action.
- 2.5 In making recommendations for the appointment of the External Examiner, the following must be complied with:
- (i) they should have a significant academic career in an appropriate field of study, a significant research record of national standing, and experience of external examining (The requirement for experience in external examining may be waived if the internal examiner has such experience).
 - (ii) they should have five years' experience in the relevant academic area and a research degree.
 - (iii) no person should be nominated as External Examiner from a School where a member of the inviting School is serving as an examiner.
 - (iv) no person shall be eligible who has an association with the nominating School which could compromise their role as External Examiner.
 - (v) former members of the University staff may not be nominated to become External Examiners before a lapse of at least five years or sufficient time for students taught by that member of staff to have passed through the system, whichever is the longer.
 - (vi) former students should not be nominated to become External Examiners before a lapse of at least five years.

- (vii) the nomination of External Examiners is to be made only from UK higher education institutions or non-UK higher education institutions with similar research degree requirements.
 - (viii) a retiring External Examiner for Research Degrees by Thesis is not eligible for nomination for examination of any student with the same first supervisor until a period of one year has elapsed.
 - (ix) a person who has been involved in the research of the candidate, or who has collaborated in the research of the first or second supervisor within the past five years, may not be appointed.
 - (x) people who have retired within three years from such posts may be considered for appointment, provided that there is evidence that they are familiar with current expectations in higher education and there is evidence that they have continued to research and publish during their retirement, and have experience of external examining within the last three years.
- 2.6 In exceptional circumstances, it may be necessary to nominate an External Examiner where one or more of these conditions needs to be set aside. This is only in a subject where there is a clear case that there are a very limited number of potential Examiners. Such a case has to be made to the Research Degrees Sub-Committee, setting out the arguments, and including an account the measures taken to recruit another suitable External Examiner.
- 2.7 As part of the appointment process, the Research Degrees Sub-Committee will identify and resolve any potential conflict of interest. It is the duty of the Research Degrees Sub-Committee to be satisfied, before making a recommendation to the Research Degree External Examiner Appointments Panel, on the suitability of a candidate for appointment.
- 2.8 Before appointment, a potential External Examiner shall declare:
- (i) any relationship with any member of the University staff or student that may affect the proper exercise of the duties of an External Examiner;
 - (ii) any contractual undertaking with the University, both business and professional;
 - (iii) any current enrolment at the University on a programme of study, whether or not in the School providing the programme to be examined.
- 2.9 During the course of an appointment, an External Examiner should inform the Head of the Graduate School, or the appropriate programme management committee, of any change that has the potential to affect the proper exercise of his/her functions.

3 Briefing and induction of External Examiners

- 3.1 Every new External Examiner will receive a formal letter of appointment from the Graduate School, or the appropriate programme management committee, setting out the period of office, the programme courses to be examined and the fee structure.
- 3.2 On appointment, each External Examiner will be provided with the necessary information to undertake the responsibilities outlined in the contract.
- 3.3 The Graduate School, or the appropriate programme management committee, shall send to each External Examiner on appointment:
- (i) a written statement about the place of the relevant examinations within the context of the programme;
 - (ii) a written statement about the organisation and phasing of reporting;

- (iii) information about the arrangements for examination of work and the viva where appropriate.
- 3.4 The Graduate School, or appropriate programme management committee, shall send to each External Examiner on appointment a copy of the Handbook for External Examiners which includes:
- (i) contractual arrangements, including rates of payment, expenses, and tenure;
 - (ii) general information about the roles, powers, and responsibilities assigned to External Examiners and the policies and procedures of the University;
 - (iii) guidelines on writing the Report;
 - (iv) details of the criteria and procedures for the premature termination of a contract.

4 Responsibilities of External Examiners

- 4.1 External Examiners, in line with the QAA Code of Practice on external examining, are, in their expert judgment, required to report on:
- (i) whether the academic standard of the thesis they are appointed to examine is appropriate for the award offered by the University, by reference to such sources as published national benchmarks, the national qualifications frameworks, University programme specifications and other relevant information;
 - (ii) the standards of student performance in those programmes or parts of programmes which they have been appointed to examine, and on the comparability of the standards with those of similar programmes or parts of programmes in other UK higher education institutions;
 - (iii) the extent to which the processes for assessment, examination, and the determination of awards are sound and have been conducted according to the University's requirements.

5 Term limits

- 5.1 The Research Degrees External Examiner Appointments Panel shall appoint External Examiners for a period of two years, renewable for one further year in exceptional circumstances. In cases where there is more than one External Examiner, the Graduate School, or the appropriate programme management committee, shall determine which one should act as Internal Examiner, in which case only the requirements for Internal Examiner shall apply.
- 5.2 An application to extend an appointment shall be submitted, with reasons for the extension, to the Research Degrees Sub-Committee via the Graduate School, or the appropriate programme management committee.