



# Examiners for Research Degrees

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## **1 Appointment of Internal Examiners for the examination of Research Degrees**

- 1.1 An Internal Examiner for a Research Degree is appointed to examine a specified candidate, and must be appointed in line with the guidance contained in the [External Examiners for Research Degrees](#) document.
- 1.2 The responsibility for the appointment of an Internal Examiner is as follows:
  - (i) for the Research Degree by Thesis the First Supervisor of the student is responsible for the appointment of an Internal Examiner, following consultation with the student and the rest of the supervisory panel.
  - (ii) For the Research Degree by Thesis and Coursework the Programme Management Committee or Board of Examiners is responsible for the appointment of an Internal Examiner.
- 1.3 The criteria for the appointment of an Internal Examiner for a Research Degree are that the Examiner must have:
  - (i) a sufficient academic career in a relevant field of study of the subject under examination; and
  - (ii) a sufficient research record of national standing, and
  - (iii) one year's experience of supervision in a relevant academic area.
- 1.4 No person who has been involved in the supervision of the research of the candidate under examination may be appointed as an Internal Examiner for the candidate.
- 1.5 Where a candidate is re-examined following failure, the person originally appointed as an Internal Examiner should normally be reappointed, subject to the above requirements in this section.

## **2 The role of External Examiners for Research Degrees**

- 2.1 External Examiners for Research Degree provision 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.

- 2.2 The independence of External Examiner in making judgements about the examination process and award of qualifications is guaranteed, and no External Examiner shall be dismissed for exercising judgement.

### **3 Nomination and appointment of External Examiners for Research Degrees**

- 3.1 One or more External Examiners must be appointed for each Research Degree submission.
- 3.2 Responsibility for the nomination of External Examiners for Research Degree by Thesis and for the thesis stage of Research Degrees by Thesis and Coursework is delegated by the Academic Board to the Research Degrees External Examiner Appointments Panel.
- 3.3 All External Examiners for Research Degrees must be of an appropriate standing in line with the criteria for appointment of Research Degree examiners, set out in [External Examiners for Research Degrees](#), as approved by the Academic Board.
- 3.4 External Examiners for Research Degrees must be appointed in a way that follows the [External Examiners for Research Degrees](#) document.
- 3.5 The nomination of an External Examiner for a Research Degree by Thesis is the responsibility of the first supervisor of the research student concerned, in consultation with the student and the rest of supervisory panel.
- 3.6 The Appointments Panel shall appoint External Examiners for a Research Degree by Thesis for a period of two years, renewable for one further year in exceptional circumstances.
- 3.7 The nomination of an External Examiner for Research Degree by Thesis and Coursework, this responsibility may be carried out by the Programme Management Committee or Board of Examiners.
- 3.8 The Programme Management Committee or Board of Examiners shall appoint External Examiners for a Research Degree by Thesis and Coursework, for up to four years.
- 3.9 In exceptional circumstances, the Research Degrees External Examiner Appointments Panel may set aside aspects of the criteria for appointment of External Examiners for Research Degrees.

### **4 Declaration of interest**

- 4.1 Nominated and existing External Examiners for Research Degrees shall declare any known conflicts of interest to the University.
- 4.2 Identified conflicts of interest shall be resolved by the University before the nomination is approved by the Research Degrees External Examiner Appointments Panel, or in the case of an existing External Examiner, before the External Examiner is next asked to undertake any element of his or her duties.

- 4.3 Where a conflict of interest cannot be resolved, the University may decide not to approve a nomination, or to discontinue an existing appointment, following the procedure set out in these Regulations.

## **5 Briefing and induction of External Examiners**

- 5.1 Following confirmation of appointment by the Research Degrees External Examiner Appointments Panel, External Examiners for Research Degrees shall be provided with a letter of appointment, allocating them to a scheme and/or programme and/or pathway.
- 5.2 External Examiners for Research Degrees shall be provided with appropriate briefings and induction.
- 5.3 Liaison with External Examiner(s) for Research Degrees shall be through the person so appointed by the Research Degrees External Examiner Appointments Panel. The School within which the student is being supervised should not liaise with the External Examiner on any matter concerning the examination, once the appointment has been made.

## **6 Early termination of External Examiner contracts**

- 6.1 The contract with an External Examiner for a Research Degree may be terminated before the end of the External Examiner's term of office in one or more of the following circumstances:
- (i) the failure to disclose a relationship, contractual or otherwise, which may impair the integrity of the examination process and the independence of the External Examiner;
  - (ii) a failure to fulfil the terms of the contract by failing to attend meetings, and/or presenting the required report(s), and/or return students' work following examination;
  - (iii) a persistent failure to make arrangements for receiving thesis and attend, where appropriate, the viva, and/or present the required reports;
  - (iv) dismissal by the main employer of the External Examiner for improper conduct in relation to the person's employment, which may impair the integrity of examination process or the independence of the External Examiner;
  - (v) disbarment from being able to practise that may impair the integrity of examination process or the independence of the External Examiner, where there is a clinical or professional element to the research degree;
  - (vi) breach of University policies, including its Equal Opportunities Policy or equivalent.
- 6.2 The early termination of a contract shall be effected by the Chair of the Research Degrees Sub Committee, who shall present a report on any such termination to the Education and Student Experience Committee.

- 6.3 Any External Examiner whose contract is subject to early termination shall have the right of appeal to the Vice-Chancellor and Principal within 28 days of the issue of the notice of termination, who shall establish a panel of independent senior members of the University to hear and determine the matter, and make recommendations.

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