

Postgraduate Research Examining Team: Guidance for Faculties

1. Overview

- 1.1 The expectations with regard to the postgraduate research degree examination process are set out in the [Regulations for Research Degrees](#) [the “Regulations”] and the [Code of Practice for Research Degree Candidature and Supervision](#) [the “Code of Practice”].
- 1.2 Research students will normally be examined by one external and one internal examiner. In exceptional circumstances, one additional external examiner may be appointed. However, and for students who are members of staff of the University of Southampton, two external examiners and one internal examiner must be appointed. For this purpose, the definition of a member of staff is as set down in the Regulations for [Members of Staff in Candidature for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy](#).
- 1.3 Students in candidature for degrees which contain a significant taught element (e.g. professional doctorates or integrated PhDs) will require separate examiners for the taught and research components. External examiners must be appointed for the taught element in accordance with the University’s [policies and procedures regarding the appointment, role and responsibilities of external examiners for taught programmes](#). This examiner may serve as an external examiner for a cohort of students for the taught component. **A student should not be examined in their taught and research component by the same external examiner.**
- 1.4 The examiners are responsible for conducting the assessment of the student’s submission in accordance with the [Regulations](#) and the [Code of Practice](#).
- 1.5 The examiners’ responsibilities do not end with the submission of their joint report and recommendation. Responsibilities also include the subsequent assessment and certification of further work required of the

student and/or attendance at any additional *viva voce* and, unless otherwise permitted, the same examining team should be retained throughout the examination process. Advice should be sought from the Quality, Standards and Accreditation Team (QSAT) should a situation arise that would suggest that a change to any member of the appointed examining team is required. Any proposed change to the examining team must be accompanied by a clear rationale for change which will be considered by the Postgraduate Research Quality Monitoring and Enhancement Subcommittee (PGR QME Subcommittee).

2. Nomination and Appointment of the Examining Team

- 2.1 Examiners should be nominated and appointed in accordance with the criteria set down in the [Code of Practice](#).
- 2.2 In order to ensure externality and quality assurance of choices made and justifications provided, all examinations' nominations should be approved by the Faculty Director of the Graduate School in their capacity as Chair of Faculty Graduate School Subcommittee (or a (sole and named) deputy who must be a member of the Faculty Graduate School directorate). Alternatively, the Faculty Director of the Graduate School may choose to refer the nomination to the Faculty Graduate School Subcommittee for its consideration.
- 2.3 Following approval of the nominees, the Doctoral College (Faculty) Team will issue a letter of appointment to the external examiner, including the [AP07 Bank Information form](#) and the [AP08 External Examiner \(PGR and PGT only\) Claim for Fees and Expenses form](#).

3. The Chair and the Independent Chair

- 3.1 The *viva voce* will be chaired by the internal examiner or by an Independent Chair appointed by the Faculty Director of the Graduate School for this purpose.
- 3.2 An Independent Chair must be appointed by the Faculty Director of the Graduate School (in their capacity as Chair of Faculty Graduate School Subcommittee) in the circumstances set down in the [Code of Practice](#)

which also sets down the eligibility and criteria for the appointment of an Independent Chair.

3.3 The Independent Chair is not a member of the examining team and does not take any part in the judgement or the student. As such, the Independent Chair is not provided with a copy of the student's thesis submission.

3.4 The Independent Chair is required to provide a written report to the Faculty Director of the Graduate School immediately following the examination. Should there be any reported concerns, the Faculty Director of the Graduate School (or their nominee) should take steps to engage the examiners in discussion with a view to satisfactorily resolving the matter. A record of all discussions should be made and retained with the examination documentation.

3.5

4. External Examiners' Fees and Expenses

4.1 Approved by the Vice-President (Research and Enterprise) and reported to the Research and Enterprise Executive Group (REEG) in March 2023, fees for the examiners of postgraduate research degrees will, from 23 March 2023 be paid at the following rates:

4.1.1 **Doctor of Philosophy, Doctor of Medicine, Doctor of Clinical Psychology, Doctor of Educational Psychology**

Fee: £200.00

The External Examiner is required to undertake an initial assessment of a <75,000-word thesis (or as per the requirements set down in the DClinPsych and DEdPsych programme specifications) and to prepare an independent report, in advance of attending the *viva voce* (in which the student's thesis and their performance is assessed) and agreeing a joint recommendation. The fee covers any subsequent assessment by the external examiner of modest amendments to the thesis.

4.1.2 **Master of Philosophy**

Fee: £150.00

The external examiner is required to undertake an initial assessment of a <50,000-word thesis and to prepare an independent report, in advance of attending the *viva voce* (in which the student's thesis and their performance is assessed) and agreeing a joint recommendation. The fee covers any subsequent assessment by the external examiner of modest amendments to the thesis.

4.1.3 Re-examination following resubmission of a revised thesis for the same degree

Fee: the external examiner should receive a repeat fee equal to the sum originally paid

This fee applies in circumstances where, as per the [Regulations](#), the student is required to resubmit a revised thesis for the same degree for re-examination (including attendance at an additional *viva voce*) on one subsequent occasion. The external examiner is required to undertake an initial assessment of the revised thesis and to prepare an independent report, in advance of attending the *viva voce* (in which the student's revised thesis and their performance is assessed) and agreeing a joint recommendation.

4.1.4 Additional *viva voce* following the student's original examination

Fee: £150.00

Students are required to satisfy the examiners in their thesis and in their performance at the *viva voce*. An additional fee should be paid to the external examiner in those circumstances where, as per the [Regulations](#), the student is required to attend an additional *viva voce* within three months of the date of the original examination.

4.1.5 Higher Doctorate

Fee: £200.00

Two external examiners are appointed to assess the applicant's submission which consists of a selection of publications which are noted as having made an original, substantial and

authoritative contribution to knowledge in the applicant's field of study. Examiners are required to undertake an initial assessment and to prepare an independent report before meeting with the internal examiner to make a joint recommendation. The examiners can require the applicant to attend a *viva voce* or prepare further work if they consider it necessary.

- 4.2 External examiners can reclaim the costs of travelling or out of pocket expenses where they were agreed by the University of Southampton in advance of the expenditure being incurred. All travelling and out of pocket expenses must be in line with the University's [Financial Regulations, Policies and Procedures](#). Information on common areas of spend relating to travel and expenses is available on the [allowable expenses page](#). It includes guidance about the information, original itemised receipts and supporting documents required when making a claim. The [Travel and expenses guidance for Non-University personnel \(visitors\)](#) covers common areas of expenses.
- 4.3 To make a claim for fees and expenses, the external examiner will need to complete the [AP07 Bank Information form](#) and the [AP08 External Examiner \(PGR and PGT only\) Claim for Fees and Expenses form](#). Both forms should be returned to the Doctoral College (Faculty) Team following the *viva voce*.
- 4.4 The Doctoral College (Faculty) Team will check that
- the [AP07 Bank Information form](#) has been fully completed; and
 - the claim detailed on the [AP08 External Examiner \(PGR and PGT only\) Claim for Fees and Expenses form](#) has been calculated correctly.
- 4.5 The Doctoral College (Faculty) Team will then arrange for the budget holder declaration to be completed and passed to the Faculty Finance Team for financial approval.
- 4.6 Once all declarations are complete, both forms can be submitted to Accounts Payable to process for payment.

Author	Quality, Standards and Accreditation Team
Owner (committee)	Postgraduate Research Quality Monitoring and Enhancement Subcommittee
Approved Date	April 2012
Last Revision	August 2025
Type of Document	Guidance