

Postgraduate Research Examining Team: Guidance for Faculties

1. Overview

- 1.1 The expectations of the University of Southampton with regard to examiners are set out in the [Regulations for Research Degrees](#) and the [Code of Practice for Research Degree Candidature and Supervision](#).
 - The research student will normally be examined by an external and an internal examiner; in exceptional circumstances, one additional external examiner may be appointed.
 - Research students who are members of staff of the University of Southampton should have two external examiners and an internal examiner appointed.
 - Other researchers who have had any co-authoring or collaborative involvement in the research student's work, or whose own work is the focus of the research project such that there would be a conflict of interest or potential lack of objectivity, may not be appointed as internal or external examiners.
 - One examiner, either the internal or the external, may be drawn from the confirmation panel or committee (e.g. an internal member of staff who acted in the role of Independent Assessor or an external Assessor if used) provided that they have had no further material contact with the research project since the confirmation, and that the other examiner is entirely new to the project.
 - Examiners, both internal and external, should have sufficient experience and appropriate subject expertise to examine effectively. They should also be sensitive to, and take into account in the examining process, reasonable adjustments, equality and diversity.
 - Collectively, the examiners should have acted as examiner for at least three doctoral examinations and be familiar with examination practice and standards in the UK. As an example, if the external examiner possesses subject expertise but limited UK examining experience, this may be compensated for by a suitably UK-experienced internal examiner.
- 1.2 Candidates for research degrees which contain a significant taught element (e.g. professional doctorates or integrated PhDs) will require separate examiners for the taught and research components. An external examiner should 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. **An individual student should not be examined in their taught and research component by the same external examiner.**
- 1.3 The examination of a resubmitted thesis is a continuation of the original examination, and the original examining team should remain in place.
- 1.4 Internal and external examiners are nominated by the co-ordinating supervisor. In order to ensure externality and quality assurance of choices made and justifications provided, examiners' nomination forms should be approved by the Faculty Director of the Graduate School in their capacity as Chair of Faculty Graduate School Committee or a (sole and named) deputy who must be a member of the Faculty Graduate School directorate.
- 1.5 The examiners' responsibilities do not end with the submission of their joint report. Responsibilities also include the subsequent assessment and certification of further work required of the student and/or attendance at any additional *viva voce*. 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 subsequent proposal 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. Internal Examiners

- 2.1 Internal examiners should be appointed in accordance with the criteria set down in the [Code of Practice for Research Degree Candidature and Supervision](#) (*Examination: Internal Examiners*).

3. External Examiners

- 3.1 External examiners should be appointed in accordance with the criteria set down in the [Code of Practice for Research Degree Candidature and Supervision](#) (*Examination: External Examiners*).

4. External Examiners' Fees

- 4.1 The external examiner's fee for postgraduate research programmes and higher doctorates was increased by AQSC in April 2012 to take effect from August 2012. The fees are as follows:

Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)	£165	Doctor of Medicine (DM)	£140
Master of Philosophy (MPhil)	£120	Higher Doctorate	£175

- 4.2 AQSC also agreed that there should be provision for Schools to pay an additional fee to an external examiner where this is appropriate given the nature of the work to be examined and where there is a need to secure a particular external from a specialist field who is unlikely to accept the appointment on the standard rate. The rate of any additional fee is at the discretion of the School.

- 4.3 AQSC set the fee for the external examination of a resubmitted thesis as follows:

Re-examination of thesis, <u>with</u> <i>viva voce</i>	Full fee payable
Re-examination of thesis, <u>without</u> <i>viva voce</i>	£120 (equivalent to MPhil rate) <u>or</u> half the initial fee, if this would be higher than £120, in cases where an additional fee is initially paid

- 4.4 Following approval of the nominees, the Faculty Graduate School Office will issue a letter of appointment to the External Examiner, including the *Bank Information (AP07) form* and the *External Examiner (PGR and PGT only) Claim for Fees and Expenses (AP08) form*, both of which can be downloaded from the [Finance Intranet](#).

- 4.5 To make a claim for fees and expenses, the External Examiner will need to complete the *Bank Information (AP07) form* and the *External Examiner (PGR and PGT only) Claim for Fees and Expenses (AP08) form*. Both forms should be returned to the Faculty Graduate School Office following the *viva voce*.

- 4.6 The Faculty Graduate School Office will check that

- the *Bank Information (AP07) form* has been fully completed;
- the claim detailed on the *External Examiner (PGR and PGT only) Claim for Fees and Expenses (AP08) form* has been calculated correctly

- 4.7 The Faculty Graduate School Office will then arrange for the budget holder declaration to be completed and pass to the Faculty Finance Team for financial approval.

- 4.8 Once all declarations are complete, both forms can be submitted to Accounts Payable to process for payment.

5. Independent Chair

- 5.1 An Independent Chair must be appointed by the Faculty Director of the Graduate School (in their capacity as Chair of Faculty Graduate School Committee) in the circumstances set down in the Code of Practice for Research Degree Candidature and Supervision (*Examination: The Independent Chair*) which also sets down the eligibility criteria for appointment.

- 5.2 The role of the Independent Chair is to monitor good practice within the examination and to ensure that:
- the examination is conducted according to the [Regulations](#) and the [Code](#);
 - the research student is treated fairly and appropriately;
 - the process is appropriate and the outcome of the examination represents fairly the views of the examiners.

Following the *viva voce*, the chair will provide a report to the FDoGS.

- 5.3 The Independent Chair is not provided with a copy of the thesis and does not take any part in its judgement.

Document Information	
Author	Quality, Standards and Accreditation Team
Owner (committee)	Postgraduate Research Quality Monitoring and Enhancement Subcommittee
Approved Date	April 2012
Last Revision	July 2022
Type of Document	Guidance