**CRITERIA FOR THE APPOINTMENT OF EXAMINERS**

**GENERAL**

1. At least two examiners must be appointed for each thesis presented for examination, at least one of whom must be an external examiner. For student candidates it is normal practice to appoint one internal and one external examiner. If the candidate is a member of the University’s staff, two external examiners and an internal coordinator must be appointed. The internal coordinator must be an academic member of staff, but should not be the supervisor.
2. In the case of a University Staff candidate holding a non-established appointment arising from external financing, one examiner may be a member of the academic staff of the University other than the grant-holder; at the discretion of the Faculty, the grant-holder may be appointed as an additional examiner.
3. If it is not possible to appoint an internal examiner, it may be necessary to appoint two external examiners and an internal coordinator.
4. The student’s supervisor is responsible for nominating suitable examiners and should do so well in advance of the student submitting their thesis, so as to avoid subsequent delays in the examination process. Nominations should not be made unless the proposed examiners have informally agreed to act. Nominations should be made by completing the Appointment of Examiners form, which must then be forwarded to the PGR Support Team in Research, Partnerships and Innovation.
5. All examiners must be formally appointed by the relevant Faculty in order to undertake an examination. Research, Partnerships and Innovation will ensure that the Appointment of Examiners form is considered by the relevant Faculty Officer. Once examiners have been approved, Research, Partnerships and Innovation will write to the examiners confirming their appointment. Under no circumstances should an examination proceed until the examiners have been formally appointed by the University.
6. Examiners should respect the confidentiality of the material they are examining. In some circumstances where students are sponsored by a company or industrial body the examiners may need to sign a specific confidentiality agreement, as required by the sponsor.
7. Where a candidate is required to resubmit their thesis, the same examiners will normally undertake the re-examination, other than in exceptional circumstances (e.g. if an examiner has since retired and no longer wishes to participate).
8. It is not considered appropriate to re-appoint the same examiners, internal or external, on multiple occasions.  Where possible, an external examiner should not be reappointed within a three-year period. Regular pairings of the same internal and external examiner should also be avoided.

**ROLE OF INTERNAL EXAMINERS**

1. The internal examiner’s role is to ensure that the examination process is conducted fairly and rigorously and to ensure that the University’s regulations and procedures are adhered to at all stages of the examination process. The internal examiner is normally a current member of the University’s academic staff and is responsible for making the necessary arrangements for the oral examination.
2. The internal examiner should be able to assess the thesis and contribute to the oral examination and must have a sound knowledge and understanding of University regulations and procedures governing the examination process. The internal examiner should have experience of successfully supervising at least one doctoral candidate to completion and/or significant experience of examining at least three doctoral theses. To assist the Faculty Officer in considering nominations for examiners, details of the proposed examiner’s previous PGR supervision and/or examination experience must be provided on the Appointment of Examiners form.
3. If a nominated examiner does not meet the above criteria, the examiner’s curriculum vitae and a supporting statement from the department as to why s/he is appropriate should be provided. The case will then be assessed by the relevant Faculty Officer.
4. If an internal examiner has not yet accrued much examining experience, it may be appropriate to also appoint a more experienced member of the department’s academic staff to act as internal coordinator. This ensures the integrity of the examination process and also enables less experienced members of staff to gain valuable examining experience.
5. The internal examiner should have no previous close personal or professional association with the student or direct involvement in their research project and must declare any past or planned future connections to the candidate.
6. The internal examiner is normally a member of the academic staff of the candidate’s department, although it may also be appropriate for the internal examiner to be drawn from another academic department.
7. Recently retired members of the University’s academic staff may be eligible for appointment as an internal examiner when this is necessary, but generally a full member of academic staff would be expected to perform this role. The University is unable to use its central examining budget for the payment of fees to retired internal examiners, and if a fee is expected, the student’s Department would normally be asked to pay it. Unfortunately, we are unable to accept internals who have retired more than four years prior to the submission of the thesis.
8. Honorary members of academic staff may be eligible to act as internal examiners, provided they have the necessary experience of the University’s examination procedures and provided they will continue to hold their honorary status for the duration of the examination. Nominations will be considered by the Faculty Officer on a case-by-case basis.
9. An internal examiner may be appointed who has been involved in the Confirmation Review, provided they have had no subsequent substantive input into the student's research project, other than involvement in the student's Submission Review.

**ROLE OF EXTERNAL EXAMINERS**

1. The external examiner is the subject specialist. External examiners must have significant and demonstrable expertise in the student’s field of research in order to provide an in-depth analysis of the thesis and in order to provide a rigorous viva voce examination.
2. The external examiner will normally lead the oral examination and oversee the direction and nature of the questioning.
3. The external examiner must be completely independent of the University. For this reason, honorary/Emeritus members of the University’s staff are not permitted to be appointed as external examiners. Former members of the University’s staff are eligible for appointment as an external examiner; however a period of at least 4 years must have elapsed before a former member of the University’s staff may be appointed as an external examiner.
4. The external examiner should have no previous close personal or professional association with the student or direct involvement in their research project and must declare any past or planned future connections to the candidate.
5. External examiners should have previous experience of examining research degrees (ideally on at least three occasions) and should normally be senior members of staff of a university or higher education institution. For the purposes of this guidance, ‘senior’ is defined as Senior Lecturer or above.
6. Where the proposed external examiner does not meet the above criteria, the supervisor must make a strong case for appointment, and should include the curriculum vitae of the proposed examiner. If an external examiner does not have sufficient experience of examining research degrees, it is essential to appoint a very experienced internal examiner.

**ROLE OF INTERNAL COORDINATORS**

1. An internal coordinator must always be appointed where there is no internal examiner. An internal coordinator should also be appointed if the internal examiner has not yet accrued much examination experience, in order to maintain the integrity of the examination process or in other circumstances where it is deemed to be desirable or appropriate. For example, an internal coordinator may be considered appropriate where one of the examiners has little experience of UK PhD examination practices, which may be very different to that of other countries. The coordinator must be an academic member of staff of the University who has knowledge and experience of University regulations and procedures governing the examination process, i.e. they should have previous experience of examining research degrees (ideally on at least three occasions). It is not appropriate for the candidate’s supervisor to act as internal coordinator. The internal coordinator must hold the status of Senior Lecturer or above.
2. The role of the internal coordinator will vary slightly depending on whether or not there is also an internal examiner. Where two external examiners have been appointed, the internal coordinator will be responsible for making the arrangements for the oral examination and ensuring that University procedures and regulations are correctly followed. Where the internal co-ordinator has been appointed because the internal examiner has had limited examination experience, the role of the internal coordinator will be to oversee the arrangements being made by the internal examiner and to provide advice and guidance on procedural and/or regulatory matters. In these circumstances, the internal examiner is responsible for including the internal coordinator in arrangements.
3. The internal coordinator must always attend the viva, but will play no part in the actual examination process and will not receive a copy of the thesis. The internal coordinator may be called upon for advice or guidance on viva procedures, including the most appropriate recommendation the examiners should make in the light of their discussions. The internal coordinator is also responsible for ensuring that the examiners complete and return the appropriate forms to Research, Partnerships and Innovation following the examination.