

16. Selection and Appointment of Examiners and Examiners' Duties

16.1 A student for a research degree shall be examined by the external and internal examiners appointed for that purpose by the Higher Degrees Committee on the nomination of the Supervision team. There shall be at least one external examiner and one internal examiner. An external examiner shall be external to and independent of the University and of a Collaborating Establishment. An internal examiner shall be a member of the staff of the University.

16.2 The application for approval of examination arrangements should be submitted for consideration by the Higher Degrees Committee at least three months prior to submission of the thesis. Examinations which do not take place within eighteen months of the date approved by the Higher Degrees Committee will require, either,

- a) confirmation by the First Supervisor (or nominee) that the examination team remain valid, or
- b) the submission of a revised application for the approval of examination arrangements.

16.3 A person who is appointed as a student's supervisor cannot be appointed as an examiner of that student.

16.4 Where the student is a member of permanent academic staff of the University, **at the time of examination**, a second external examiner shall be appointed.

- a) Where the student is registered for a PhD by Published Works two external examiners and at least one internal examiner shall be appointed. This regulation shall apply to all students regardless of his/her status at the time of examination.
- b) Research Students who engage in not more than 6 hours per week of teaching during their research studies do not fall within the scope of this regulation.

16.5 In appointing examiners the Higher Degrees Committee must ensure that the following criteria are met:

- a) The examining team as a whole must have:
 - i) substantial experience in examining research degree students at the level of the degree in question; and
 - ii) substantial knowledge of current research relating to the subject area of the submission.
- b) For PhD examinations, at least one examiner shall normally possess a PhD or equivalent qualification

In order to meet these criteria, additional examiners may be appointed as necessary.

- c) No person who is registered as a student for a research degree at this University or elsewhere may act as an examiner.
- d) All examiners shall be independent of the student and the student's work. No examiner shall have provided any formal guidance in respect of the context or structure of the thesis, thesis project or other submitted work, see also Regulation 16.6 above.
- e) Former members of the staff of the University are not normally eligible for appointment as external examiners until three years after the termination of his/her employment.
- f) All examiners shall be independent of the candidate and the candidate's work. No examiner shall have provided any formal guidance in respect of the context or structure of the thesis, thesis project or other submitted work.

16.6 Nomination of Internal Examiners.

- a) Proposals for Examination Arrangements will normally identify only **one** Internal Examiner, who **must** have previous examining experience of at least two research degrees and have attended Certificate in Research Supervision.

Where a second internal examiner is required under 16.6b) below they each must also have attended the Certificate in Research Supervision.

- b) An 'experienced internal examiner' is a person whose experience is sufficient to give themselves, his/her peer group and the University confidence that they can play a full and balanced role as the sole or lead internal examiner for a research degree. Administrative aspects of this role are as laid out in the 'Guidance Notes for Examiners'. Further, the experienced internal examiner is expected to exercise judgement about the conduct of the examination process such that the outcome is commensurate with the performance. S/he is also responsible for ensuring that standards are appropriately maintained. In other words it is a responsibility of the experienced internal examiner to ensure that the expectations of fellow examiners are neither excessive nor inadequate.

A 'new internal examiner' is one who is gaining experience in the processes but has not yet reached the standing of experienced internal examiner. Normally, after participating satisfactorily in two examinations it is likely that a new internal examiner shall be eligible to become an experienced internal examiner. The transfer test shall be by self-certification against a checklist, the Chair of Higher Degrees Committee (or nominee) shall review and countersign, except in rare cases where further experience is deemed to be desirable to protect the students' interest.

- c) When **two** Internal Examiners are proposed, the experience of one must be certified (See Regulation 16.6b) above) and additionally must, for PhD examinations, have examined at least one at the level of the award. A case must be made giving the reasons for the nomination of a second Internal Examiner.

The major justifications for proposing **two** Internal Examiners are:

- i) Staff development

the nomination of a new inexperienced Examiner to work with an experienced Examiner, in order to gain relevant examining experience as part of a planned staff development exercise.

- ii) Subject expertise

the nomination of an inexperienced Examiner with specific and unique experience of the subject matter of the dissertation, and an experienced Examiner, who is able to give support to both the inexperienced Internal Examiner and the student, or

- iii) the nomination of **two** experienced examiners to cover separate, highly specialised aspects of the research project/dissertation.

16.7 The duties of examiners shall be as follows:

- a) All examiners are required to complete an independent pre-viva form and submit to the Graduate School Office at least five days prior to the date of examination.
- b) The examiners are required to hold an oral examination, (viva voce), except in the most exceptional of circumstances, see Regulation 17.1.
- c) The examiners are required to submit an Examiners Report form and recommendation on the appropriate form, unless they are in disagreement in which case separate report forms must be submitted (see Regulation 19 below). Also to assess material subsequent to the viva where appropriate.
- d) Examiners are expected to complete the examining process within ten weeks of receiving the thesis. This applies to re-submissions also. If this cannot be achieved, a report outlining reasons for delay, must be submitted to the Higher Degrees Committee.

The experienced internal examiner is deemed to play the role of independent Chair.