

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.

**16.8** 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 known as the 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 voce 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 Graduate School Office.

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

**17. Oral Examination (Viva Voce)**

**17.1** All students are examined orally in English, (except when submitting under Regulation 11.2), on the programme of work and on the field of study. However, in cases of sickness, disability or comparable valid cause, an alternative form of examination may be approved. Such cases require the approval of the Director of the Graduate School on the recommendation of the examiners and/or supervision team.

**17.2** The purposes of an oral examination are:

- a) to establish that the submitted work is that of the student;
- b) to give the student the opportunity to defend the direction, structure and conclusions of the work. This involves the examiners making constructive criticisms of both the research and the thesis and giving the student the

opportunity to respond;

- c) to explore with the student any particular issues in the thesis or submitted work which require clarification or development. This is particularly important in cases where the examiners feel that their final decision could be other than an unconditional pass;
- d) to test the student's personal eligibility for the award of the degree by exploring his/her understanding of issues arising in and from the research and of the relationship of the research to the wider field of knowledge. In the case of a PhD student, the student should be able to demonstrate his/her understanding of the nature and extent of the original contribution to knowledge entailed in the research.

**17.3** If one or more of the examiners contact the Graduate School Office to say that, in their opinion, the standard of the thesis is such that the oral examination should be postponed, the Director of the Graduate School shall consider the matter and decide whether or not to allow the scheduled oral examination to proceed. If the decision is to postpone, then student, supervisors and examiners will be notified of this and of actions that need to be taken in order that the oral examination can be re-scheduled at a later date. The internal examiner is responsible for coordinating the preparation of a single examiners' report on behalf of all examiners and communicating it to the student.

Postponement will normally not exceed six months and in any case will not exceed one year.

**17.4** One of the student's supervisors who is not an examiner may attend the oral examination to answer questions, unless the student has expressed a wish to the contrary. The purpose of this is to assist the student and examiners with matters of clarification only and not to participate in the oral examination. Attendance by a supervisor is not compulsory but if the student feels that this would be helpful, the University then expects the supervisor to be at the oral examination.

**17.5** Oral examinations must normally take place with the student and the examination team present at the same location. Exceptionally, the examination may be conducted through video conferencing facilities, subject to the approval of the Director of the Graduate School.

**17.6** The recording of the proceedings of the oral examination, by any method, is normally prohibited.

**17.7** The oral examination should **normally** last between two and three hours. The pattern for each particular oral is for the examiners to determine but in most cases the examiners will wish to focus on a detailed consideration of the research, its methodology and its findings. In some cases, however, the examiners could wish to focus on a discussion of broader aspects of the research process or findings, or the

implications for policy/research, or publication possibilities. For this, the student could be invited to highlight aspects or issues that appear most important or interesting.

Supervisors of students who are undertaking their research degree by Exhibition, Performance or similar work must arrange **prior** to the oral for the full examination team to have sight of the work. This may be in the form of a performance to which the examination team are invited or could be a private showing of the work set up for this purpose. This showing can take place well in advance or on the day of the viva voce. The student must ensure the final submission is accompanied by some permanent record (for instance, computer disk, video, photographic record, musical score, choreographic notation, diagrammatic representation) of the exhibition, performance or other creative work where practicable, bound with the thesis and with the electronic copy. In addition, it is expected that normally the textual component of the submission sent to examiners should be accompanied by documentary evidence in photographic/video form of the creative work undertaken.

**17.8** The intention is that oral examinations should be constructive and stimulating for all participants. The students should expect to be challenged on their ideas, but should be assured that the experience is intended to be helpful and positive. In preparation, students are advised to re-familiarise themselves with their thesis, make their own assessment of its strengths and weaknesses, and try to anticipate issues that are likely to be raised. The student must bring a copy of his/her thesis with them to the oral examination.

**17.9** No communication shall be made with a student for the award of a distinction of the University which purports to be, or might reasonably be taken to be, official notification of the results of the candidature, except by the Graduate School Office on behalf of the Director of Student and Academic Services.

## **18. Examination Outcomes**

**18.1** Unless operating under Regulation 19, a copy of the final joint report shall be issued to the student. In the case of 18.2 b) and c) below the student will be given a written statement of the work to be done to achieve his/her degree within an agreed timescale. The criteria for assessing the degree of MA/MSc by Research/MPhil shall be in accordance with Regulation 1.3 and those for PhD shall be in accordance with Regulation 1.4.

**18.2** The final report of the examiners on the student shall recommend one of the following:

- a) the student should be awarded the degree sought;
- b) the student should be awarded the degree sought, provided that minor amendments and corrections in the submitted work are made to the satisfaction of the nominated examiner(s) within a specified period not exceeding three

months from the notification of the result to the student;

- c) the student be permitted to re-submit for the degree sought and be re-examined as follows:
  - i) the thesis to be revised and if deemed satisfactory by the Examiners, the student will be exempt from further examination, oral or otherwise; or
  - ii) the thesis to be revised and the student must undergo a further oral or alternative examination; or
  - iii) the thesis is satisfactory, but the student must undergo a further oral examination or other such examination as the examiners shall specify.

In this case the examiners shall specify the maximum period open to the student to re-submit, this period is not to exceed 12 months. The maximum period shall date from the notification of the result to the student.

Examiners shall not make recommendations 18.2 c) if they are examining a student who is already re-presenting *unless* the re-presentation is the outcome of an appeal;

- d) if a student for PhD, the student should be awarded the MPhil, if appropriate, subject to corrections on the basis stated in 18.2 b) above. Examiners must only make this recommendation for positive achievement by the student in accordance with Regulation 1.3; or
- e) the student should not be awarded any degree and should be given no further opportunity of examination.
- f) the examiners may also offer a PhD student a choice between accepting an MPhil as in 18.2d) or requiring major revisions over a period of time in 18.2c) to achieve PhD. The student shall be given no more than one month to select the route that they wish to follow.

Where examiners recommend in terms set out in Regulations 18.2 b), c) or d) they must agree a list of deficiencies of the thesis and this must be communicated in writing to the student via the Graduate School Office as soon as possible and definitely within 20 days of the oral examination (excluding grammatical and typographical errors, which may be advised to the student separately).

Where the examiner recommends that a student should not be awarded the degree sought as set out in 18.2 e) above, and should have no further opportunity of examination, the examination team must complete the 'Statement of Reasons for Failure' form. If the student appeals against the outcome they will be provided with a copy of this statement, it should therefore be as practicable whilst safeguarding