

Guidelines for Nominating PhD/MPhil Examiners

PhD examinations will normally combine one external examiner and one internal examiner. Where the candidate is a member of the academic staff (have an employment contract with the College) or there is lack of expertise to allocate or conflict of interests for the internal examiners to examine the topic, there should always be a minimum of two external examiners.

The nominated Examiners must be supported by the Dean of the School or PGR leads and approved through the Research Degree Committee and the Research and Innovation Committee.

Supervisors are responsible for seeking suitably qualified examiners for their PGR candidates; PGRs should not be contacting potential examiners nor should they be nominating them. We would expect supervisors to discuss potential examiners with PGRs, but the responsibility for nominating a well-balanced appropriate team lies with the primary supervisor.

Supervisors should make initial contact with proposed examiners, checking their eligibility and availability. Examiners should then complete their section of the nomination form (this must be completed by the examiner to ensure due diligence).

Examiner nominations must be received 6 months before the PhD/MPhil submission date and are valid for 12 months.

Where revisions or corrections are required their terms of engagement are extended to enable them to review the resubmitted documents.

Examiners are paid for completion of the examination work in its entirety and as governed by RCA regulations. For examination outcomes without corrections, they will be paid upon receipt of the post-viva survey. For examination outcomes with corrections, they will be paid upon receipt of a completed corrections form following review of the amended thesis. For examination outcomes with a resubmission, they will be paid following review of the amended thesis and reexamination if required.

Criteria for Appointment

In appointing Boards of Examiners, the Research Office, the Research Degree Committee and the Research and Innovation committee will consider the overall composition of the Board in order to achieve an appropriately qualified, experienced and independent set of examiners.

Internal Examiners

1. Staff who are or who have been a supervisor of the student at any time cannot be an Internal Examiner for that student
2. The Research Degree Committee is involved in the process to ensure:
 - College-wide consistency;
 - Sound academic justification is provided;
 - The relevant external examiner supports the process.

Internal examiners should have had no previous connection with the candidate/project. They should be suitably qualified as a primary supervisor ([see Supervision Research Policy](#)) and should have

sufficient knowledge of the field and form of submission to be able to contribute to the examination process; it is not expected that they are experts in the field.

External Examiners MUST:

- Hold academic/professional qualifications appropriate to the research project being examined. An External Examiner must be expert in the specialised area of research and should have appropriate standing, expertise and experience within the field to maintain the College's academic standards.
- Have recent external examining experience in the last 3 years or comparable related experience to indicate competence in assessing students in the subject area.
 - If the proposed examiner has no previous examining experience at postgraduate research level, the application should be supported by evidence of relevant and recent experience likely to support the External Examiner role.
- Be drawn from different institutional/professional contexts. There must not be reciprocal external examination between the College and another institution or replacement of an appointed External Examiner by another individual from the same institution.
- Have no previous close involvement with the College which might compromise their objectivity.
- Have not been a member of staff, a member of the Council, a student, or a near relative of a member of staff or have acted in a supervisory capacity to the student. Where the programme has a partnership arrangement with another institution, the External Examiner should not have been a staff member of the host programme of the partner institution during the last three years.
- Have not been contracted to the College in any capacity on more than two occasions in the past three years, including as a visiting lecturer, casual worker or external examiner.
- Have not collaborated or co-authored with members of staff in the same School/Centre in the past five years.
- Be prepared to sign a confidentiality agreement if required by the nature of the work and endorsed by the Head of Doctoral Programmes.
- Declare any conflict of interest with regard to examination of the research topic (e.g. commercial interest in a related project).
- Not currently cworking or holding a grant with any of the candidate's supervisors in the preceding three years.
- Be available to examine the submitted project, usually within three months of submission.
- Have the 'right to work' in the UK, provide a share code, or eligible immigration documents. Where a School/Centre wishes to appoint an external examiner who does not meet this criterion, the School must indicate a compelling case for this and agree to meet any additional costs to the usual budget accrued in terms of visas and travel.