The University of Huddersfield

Criteria for the Selection and Appointment of Examiners for Research Awards

The following are absolute requirements of the examination team:

- As a minimum, two appropriately qualified examiners are appointed for the purpose, at least one of whom is internal and one external to the University.
- In cases where the research student is also a member of staff, at least two external examiners should be appointed, in addition to one internal.
- None of the candidate’s supervisors may be appointed as an examiner.
- Examiners should normally have relevant qualifications at least equivalent to that being examined.
- Examiners should understand the procedures which operate within the University of Huddersfield, and have a clear sense of the expectations and standards associated with a successful Huddersfield award.
- The examination team as a whole must be able to demonstrate appropriate prior experience and training in the examination procedure and will normally have examined at least three research degrees equivalent in level to the award being examined.
- The examining team must be able to reach an independent and authoritative judgement about the candidate’s work, free from bias and conflict of interest.

It would be exceptional for an examiner not to meet the following criteria:

1. Standing, Expertise and Experience

Examiners should:

- Have expertise in the specific area of research to be examined
- Be experienced in research
- Have published in a relevant area
- Be able to demonstrate appropriate prior experience in the examination procedure, at least equivalent in level to the award being examined.
- Hold a research degree at least equivalent to the level of the award being examined or have at least national standing in the subject area.

External examiners only:

- Normally be a specialist in the topic(s) to be examined.

Internal examiners only:

- It is a requirement that the nominated member of staff has attended University training for the role.

2. Close Involvement

No-one in the following circumstances or categories should be appointed as an examiner:

- Anyone who has been a member of the student’s supervisory team or been directly involved in the research of the candidate

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- Anyone significantly involved in recent or current substantive research activities with the student.
- Anyone whose own work is the specific focus of the research project.
- **Anyone with a contractual or personal relationship with either the student or his / her supervisor(s), or who has a financial interest in the research of the student.**

External examiners only:

- A member of a governing body or committee of the University or a current employee of the University.
- Former staff or students of the University, unless a period of two years has elapsed.
- Examiners who have been, or are currently acting as, the external examiner for a taught course will not normally be excluded from appointment as a research degree examiner.

3. FREQUENCY OF APPOINTMENT:

Careful consideration should be given to whether the same external examiner should be appointed for successive students of the same supervisor.

An external should not normally be appointed more than three times in any three-year period, with a minimum of 6 months between tenures.

An external examiner who is appointed for progression monitoring of a staff candidate may also act as examiner for the final submission of that same candidate.

**EXCEPTIONS:**

In cases where the appointment would be an exception to the above criteria, the Director of Graduate Education may appoint an independent chair or seek ensure that other examiners on the team compensate in terms of standing, expertise and experience.

All exceptions must be agreed by the Dean of the Graduate School.

**Appointment of an Independent Chair**

The Director of Graduation Education may appoint an independent chair under the following circumstances:

- Where the internal examiner will be undertaking their first appointment as a research degree examiner.
- Where the internal examiner is still under probation and this will be their first appointment as internal examiner at Huddersfield.
- Where neither the external or internal examiner holds a senior academic position.
- Where there are a limited number of previous UK PGR examinations across the team.
- Where a second viva is required on a resubmission following referral.
- Where approval is given for the viva to be conducted via video streaming.
- Where exceptional or non-standard examination arrangements are agreed
- Any other circumstance which the Director of Graduate Education considers it necessary.

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**Termination of an Examiner’s Appointment**

An examiner’s appointment may only be terminated prematurely in exceptional circumstances.

Any decision to terminate an appointment prematurely must be referred by the School’s Director of Graduate Education and to the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research and Enterprise) in writing, giving reasons for the request. The grounds for premature termination may include the following:

- Failure to participate in the examination without due reason
- Failure to submit a report without due reason
- Failure to comply with all of the procedures of the examination process or the University’s regulations and policies more generally

**Loss of an Examiner / Failure of an Examiner to Respond**

In case an examiner is no longer available to review and sign off amendments following referral, or in case an examiner fails to comply with the examination process (including unacceptable delays in the submission of reports), the Dean of Graduate School will approve alternative examination arrangements.

**Relationships in this category will be on a spectrum such that appointing bodies may exercise an element of discretion and consider carefully whether the relationship presents a potential risk of perceived or actual bias – particularly in the case of research contracts. “Personal” here is taken to mean social and/or family connection**