

**Guidance for External and Internal Examiners and
for Convenors and Chairs of Examining Boards for Research Degrees
(MbyRes, MPhil, PhD, Professional Doctorates)**

This document should be read in conjunction with the following regulations and codes of practice:

Regulations for Postgraduate Research Programmes (Regulation 03)

Code of Practice for Assurance of Academic Quality and Standards of Research Programmes (Code 03)

Code of Practice for External Examiners: Research Degree (Code 05)

1. Administrative Arrangements

The Head of School shall be responsible for ensuring that the School has the correct administrative procedures for the submission and examination of theses. The Chair of each Examining Board shall be responsible for ensuring that the thesis is examined, and the results reported, in accordance with the University's regulations and procedures.

External and Internal Examiners must submit their preliminary reports before the date for the oral examination. Examining Boards are expected to complete the examination of the candidate and submit their final reports as soon as reasonably possible and normally no later than 3 months from receipt of the thesis. If the Examiners are unable to meet these deadlines, they must notify the Convenor and Secretary of the Board of the reasons for the delay. The University is, however, concerned to avoid candidates facing lengthy delays during the examination process.

2. Duties of the Examiners

Examiners must judge the thesis on the basis of the standard and scope of work which it is reasonable to expect from a postgraduate research student after a specified period of study (as defined by Regulation 03, and particularly in paragraph 11 or paragraph 14).

3. Award Criteria

5. Examination of Theses

The procedures for examination of theses are defined in Regulation 03 as:

73. An Examining Board will comprise the following :

- chair
- internal examiner (except for students who are members of staff)
- external examiner
- second external examiner (only for students who are members of staff)

The selection criteria for examiners are defined in the Code of Practice for External Examiners: Research Degrees (Code 05).

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6. The Oral Examination

6.1 The oral examination is an integral part of the examination process for a research degree and examiners are asked to exert great care to avoid giving the impression at any time that the oral examination is, in any sense, a mere formality. The purpose and arrangements for oral examinations are defined in Regulation 03 as:

80. The purpose of the oral examination is to:

- allow the examiners to assure themselves that the thesis is the student's own work
- give the student an opportunity to defend the thesis and clarify any matters raised by the examiners

7. Guidance on the Completion of the Examiners' Report Forms

- 7.1 Reporting on the examination of a research degree is a three part process. Three forms (with specific versions for each type of research degree) are provided for the examiners. The forms must be returned to the Academic Registry together with the Notice of Candidature.

Form 1: Used by the Internal and External Examiners to provide a preliminary report on the thesis. The Chair of the Examining Board should arrange for the Internal and External Examiners to consider the content of each other's reports, normally immediately prior to the oral examination. The reports should be sufficiently detailed to assess the scope and significance of the thesis and to appreciate its strengths and weaknesses. Reports should, as far as possible, be expressed in terms that may be understood by those who are not specialists in the particular field of the thesis. Evaluative comments should be as full as possible

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