APPOINTMENT OF EXAMINERS (RESEARCH DEGREES)

Equality and Diversity Statement

City, University of London is committed to promoting equality, diversity and inclusion in all its activities, processes, and culture, under its Public Sector Equality Duties and the Equality Act 2010. This includes promoting equality and diversity for all, irrespective of any protected characteristic, working pattern, family circumstance, socio-economic background, political belief or other irrelevant distinction.

Where relevant to the policy, decision-making panels will ensure a reasonable gender balance (with at least one man and one woman) and will actively consider representation of other protected groups.

MARCH 2021
Appointment of Examiners for research degrees

1. In this policy “you”, “your” and “yours” means a student registered for a research degree awarded by City, University of London. “We”, “us” and “our” means the University or any of its staff, depending on the context.

2. This policy sets out the criteria for the appointment of examiners for research degrees. You and your supervisors should discuss the examiners who would be most suited to the examination of your thesis, following your declaration of your Intention to Submit. The following statements should be read alongside the University’s Regulations for Doctoral Programmes (Senate Regulation 24) and Masters Degrees by Research (Senate Regulation 23). The statements are intended to provide further clarity on the policies and processes that assure the quality and enhancement of research degree provision across the University and which are outlined in the Research Degrees Framework.

3. The University's Research Degree Framework and Regulations apply equally to partnership provision unless different arrangements have been agreed between the University and the partner institution and have received University approval. Details will be set out in the Memorandum of Agreement for the partnership and in information provided to students.

4. All appointments of examiners for research degrees require approval from the Doctoral College Board of Studies on the recommendation of the Senior Tutor for Research and School Research Programmes Committee.

Principles

5. Examiners are required to:

   i. Prepare independent reports on the submission prior to the viva voce examination;
   ii. Make a joint judgement as to whether the submission contains sufficient evidence of systematic study and, for the award of a doctoral degree, makes an original contribution to the subject either by the discovery of new facts or exercise of independent critical power or, for the award of a Masters degree by research, is either a record of original work or demonstrates a critical exposition of existing knowledge.

6. Examiners are appointed when the student has given at least 3 months' notice of their intention to submit.

7. One external examiner and one internal examiner are normally appointed for student candidates but two external examiners may be appointed in some instances. Two external examiners are appointed for staff candidates in order to ensure that there is no conflict of interest.

8. In exceptional circumstances, we may nominate a third examiner where the project is interdisciplinary in nature and there is insufficient expertise between the two examiners to examine the breadth of the thesis. Any third examiner nominated must be an external examiner.
9. No member of a student's supervisory team may act as examiners.

10. All examiners are expected to have knowledge of the subject area under examination.

11. At least one examiner should have previous experience of conducting a UK MPhil/PhD examination in a research-intensive university. Where one of the examiners is examining a MPhil/PhD thesis for the first time, they should be paired with an experienced examiner (a minimum of three prior examinations at the appropriate level is suggested, collectively).

12. Examiners will be advised of the relevant regulations under which the thesis should be examined.

13. Schools should consider the gender balance of the examiners and the examination Chair when considering and nominating examiners for approval.

**External Examiners**

14. External examiners should normally:

   i. Be a recognised international expert in the field of study;
   
   ii. Hold a doctorate, or, in the case of examination of an MPhil thesis, hold at least a Masters degree by research.
   
   iii. Have experience of examining a research student at a research-intensive university.

15. External examiners from outside Higher Education, i.e. from industry or the professions, or without experience of examining research candidates, may be appropriate in some circumstances. The Doctoral College Board of Studies must be satisfied that such examiners are fully conversant with the requirements of the research degree and that the other examiner(s) have appropriate experience in examining research degrees.

16. Schools should not normally nominate an external examiner who has already been appointed by the School within the previous twelve months; any such requests should be forwarded to the Doctoral College for approval before the nomination is made.

**Internal Examiners**

17. The internal examiner is expected to be a subject expert and to uphold City’s academic regulations, in conjunction with the Chair. Internal examiners, who may include Visiting Lecturers, Honorary staff or Research Fellows where appropriate, must have a current contract of employment with City or be recently retired.
Conflicts of Interest

18. Conflicts of interest, where the examiner(s) have a professional or personal interest in the outcome of the examination, must be avoided or declared as part of the nominations process in order that advice can be taken. Examples include:
   i. The examiners have collaborated or co-authored with the candidate
   ii. The examiners own work forms a significant part of the thesis
   iii. The examiners have collaborated or co-authored with the supervisors or internal examiner on topics closely related to the research (including joint grant holding)
   iv. The external examiner has a formal relationship with the department which may have brought them into contact with the candidate (e.g. honorary visiting professor)
   v. The supervisor, internal examiner or chair has recently examined or will shortly examine one of the external examiner’s own research students (within the last 12 months)
   vi. The external examiner is the member of a funding committee that relates to the project
   vii. There is a personal relationship (e.g. sexual, romantic and/or familial) between the examiner(s), supervisors, chair or candidate
   viii. Where the research project involves collaboration or funding with an external partner, that the external examiner is not independent of this relationship
   ix. The external examiner has a direct commercial interest in the outcomes of the research
   x. The external examiner was either the supervisor of or supervised by one of the project supervisors (within the last 10 years)
   xi. The external examiner has previously worked at City, University of London (within the last 5 years)
   xii. The internal examiner has retired from City but has subsequently held a visiting lectureship (no more than 18 months beyond the date of retirement)
   xiii. The examiners have acted as a personal tutor, or dissertation supervisor to the candidate as part of a previous taught programme (this may be at a previous institution)

19. The University will receive nominations of examiners for research degrees through Student and Academic Services. The approval of external examiners will be monitored by Student and Academic Services and approved through the Doctoral College Board of Studies to ensure that the same examiners are not appointed for several candidates over a prolonged period in the same department and that examiners and chairs are gender-balanced where possible.
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<th>Policy Title</th>
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<td>Appointment of Examiners (Research Degrees)</td>
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<tr>
<th>Policy Enabling Owner and Department</th>
<th>Responsible for Implementation and Department</th>
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<tr>
<td>Quality and Academic Development, Student and Academic Services</td>
<td>City Doctoral College, Schools</td>
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<th>Approving Body</th>
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| Senate, upon recommendation from Doctoral College Board of Studies | *March 2021*  
15 June 2012 (Education Committee)  
22 April 2009 (APPSC) |

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<tr>
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<td>March 2021</td>
<td>March 2024</td>
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**Publication of Policy** *(tick as appropriate)*

For public access online (internet)? [x]  
For staff access only (intranet)? [ ]

Queries about this policy should be referred to

*Quality and Academic Development, Student and Academic Services*  
[QUAD@city.ac.uk](mailto:QUAD@city.ac.uk)