Appointment of Examiners

Scope
All full and part-time research students, including those registered on a validated research degree programme, academic staff with a responsibility for the supervision and examination of research students and administrative staff who have a role in supporting academic staff in their role. Additionally, all internal and external examiners with a responsibility for examining research students.

Senate Regulations:
Regulation 24 – Doctoral Programmes
Regulation 23 – Masters Degree by Research

Date approved/re-approved
APPSC 22 April 2009, minor updates Education Committee 15 June 2012

Date for review
To be reviewed on a periodic basis, with allowance for minor annual updates of roles and responsibilities by Graduate School Committee, as required.

To be read in conjunction with Section 9 of the University’s Quality Manual, in particular the following:
Policy on the Appointment of Examiners
Policy on the Submission and Resubmission of Thesis
Policy on the Viva voce or oral examination
Guidance on Examiners’ Duties
Notes for Students on the Viva voce examination.

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.
Appointing of Examiners for research degrees

The following statements should be read alongside the University’s Regulations for Doctoral Programmes and Masters Degrees by Research. 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 Framework for Research Degrees Provision.

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.

All appointments of examiners for research degrees require initial approval from the School Board of Studies on the recommendation of the Senior Tutor/Director of Research.

Examiners are required to:

- Prepare independent reports on the submission prior to the viva voce examination;
- Make a joint judgment on 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 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.

Additionally, the external examiner should normally:

- Be an expert in the field of study;
- Be a professor or reader at an institution of Higher Education or have appropriate experience in examining research candidates;
- Hold a doctorate, or, in the case of examination of an MPhil thesis, hold at least a Masters degree by research.

External examiners from outside Higher Education from industry or the professions, or without experience of examining research candidates, may be appropriate in some circumstances. Boards of Studies should 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.

Principles

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

No member of a student’s supervisory team may act as examiners.

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

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

In order to ensure that the examination is conducted fairly the following principles should also be observed:

External examiners should not normally have had any significant contact with the student during their course of research.

Individuals whose own research work forms a significant part of the thesis should not normally be appointed as an external examiner.

Examiners should normally be independent from one another and from the first supervisor.

Former members of staff should not be invited to become external examiners before a lapse of at least 5 years;

Members of staff who have retired but hold a visiting lectureship may act as an internal examiner for up to 18 months from the date of retirement.

The University will receive and approve nominations of examiners for research degrees through Student and Academic Services. The approval of external examiners at programme level will be additionally be monitored by Student and Academic Services in order to ensure that the same examiners are not appointed for several candidates over a prolonged period in the same department.