

FACULTY OF HUMANITIES
PROCEDURAL GUIDANCE FOR NEW INTERNAL EXAMINERS TO THE UNIVERSITY OF MANCHESTER & INDEPENDENT CHAIRS IN PREPARATION FOR THE PGR ORAL EXAMINATION

This guidance is intended for use by academic and administrative staff at the University of Manchester (hereinafter “the University”) to induct academic colleagues into the process of internal examining of research degrees, in line with policy (Nomination of Examiners and Independent Chairs for Postgraduate Research Degrees (September 2009), section 7.1.vi-viii). It outlines key stages in procedure and practice¹ relating to the roles and responsibilities of the Internal Examiner during pre- and post the oral examination of both PhD and MPhil candidates and the support and guidance that they can expect to receive from the Independent Chair. The guidance is intended to complement and reflect the University’s existing systems policies including:

- [Nomination of Examiners and Independent Chairs for Postgraduate Research Degree Examinations Policy \(September 2009\)](#) (hereinafter “Nomination Policy”)
- [Examination of Doctoral Degrees Policy \(May 2012\)](#) and [Examination of Master of Philosophy Degrees \(MPhil\) \(May 2012\)](#) (hereinafter “the Examination Policies”) and
- [Presentation of Theses Policy \(June 2014\)](#) (hereinafter “the Presentation Policy”)

Where a senior member of staff has examined before at another institution, **but has been newly appointed to the UoM and has been invited to act as an Internal Examiner**, we would not expect them to follow the structured support detailed within this guidance note. In those cases, the PGR Director would appoint someone to provide the new member of staff with guidance and the **appropriate** adequate level of support commensurate to their experience.

Key Stages

The PGR Director approves the nomination of Examiners [Nomination of Examiners and Independent Chairs for Postgraduate Research Degree Examinations Policy \(September 2009\) Ss 7- 9](#)



Meeting 1: Before assessing the thesis, the IE arranges an appointment with the IC to discuss:

- The key role and responsibilities of the IE, EE and IC (if applicable) (Ss 5-8 of the Nomination policy);
- Timeframe and deadlines for organising and holding the thesis (S11 of the Examination policies) including publication of Oral Examination Notice on eProg (deadline 8 weeks after thesis dispatched to Examiners);
- Pre-examination administrative formalities including disability support and liaising with the EE (Ss 8 and 12 of the Examination policies);
- Whether the thesis meets the University’s requirements under the Presentation Policy.
- Assessing the thesis according to the criteria for examination (S5 of the Examination policies).

Meeting 2: Once the IE has read the thesis they should meet with the IC to discuss:

- Writing the IE pre-oral report following the guidance on the report and in S15 of the Examination Policies – key areas of thesis to be addressed, identify corrections required, predicted outcome and reasoning behind this. At this stage, the IC may need to help define the award and referral categories and the expectations of a PhD/MPhil thesis for each recommendation;
- The pre-oral examination meeting between the IE and EE (S16 of the Examination Policies) to exchange pre-oral reports, identify issues to be raised in the examination and discuss strategy for viva, confer with Supervisor if required;
- The conduct of the oral examination (Ss 13.3 and 18 of the Examination Policies) – the signing of the confidentiality undertaking, the format for the oral examination and the questioning style.

Meeting 3: Oral and post oral examination the IE and IC meet:

Once the viva is complete and the student has left the room, the IE, EE and IC discuss the outcomes of the viva in preparation for the writing of the Joint Examiners' Report and also to discuss:

- The process of the preparation and the planned content of the Joint Examiners' Report (S20 of the Examination Policies);
- The outcome in cases where the IE and EE do not agree (S22 of the Examination Policies).

Meeting 4: Post oral examination the IE and IC meet to discuss:

- The content of the Joint Examiners' Report to check that this is a standalone report that provides adequate feedback for the PGR candidate;
- Uploading of pre-oral and Joint Examiners' reports to eProg within 3 working days after oral examination;
- The next stage of the process – i.e. the ratification of the award by the School/Faculty PGRC committee;
- The signing off of corrections process should this be an Aii award;
- The resubmission process should this be a referral recommendation.

Actions Required:**Internal Examiner****Pre-Oral Examination**

- Accept/decline the invitation to act as Internal Examiner and await receipt of thesis from PGR Administration team;
- Before assessing the thesis, the Internal Examiner should meet with the Independent Chair and discuss the academic and administrative steps;
- Once the Internal Examiner has read the thesis, they should meet with the Independent Chair to discuss preparation of the pre-oral report and strategy for the pre-oral examination meeting between the External Examiner and the Supervisor.

At the Oral Examination:

- The Internal Examiner should host the External Examiner and carry out all academic and administrative formalities as prescribed in the Examination Policies;

Post Oral Examination:

- Meet with the Independent Chair to discuss the preparation of the joint Examiners' Report;
- Upload the pre-oral and Joint Examiners' report onto eProg within three days of the oral examination;
- Approve and sign-off any corrections that the candidate had to make to the thesis within the prescribed time limit;
- Liaise with the External Examiner if any clarification on corrections is required.

Independent Chair

- The key role of the Independent Chair throughout this process is to use their skill and knowledge to mentor and support the Internal Examiner through the pre-oral, oral examination and post-oral examination stages.
- They should meet with the Internal Examiner as suggested in the guidance and ensure that the Internal Examiner is clear about all key academic and administrative tasks that they have to perform.

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