

## **Appointment of External Examiners for Graduate Degrees by Research & Thesis**

### *1. Selection and Nomination of External Examiners*

In line with the University's policy and stated commitment to best practice in equality issues, Heads must ensure, insofar as possible, a balanced gender representation in the appointment of External and Internal Examiners to the examining team for research awards.

Most particularly for research awards, Heads should seek to ensure that an examining panel of one gender only is avoided. (Where this is not possible the appointment of the Independent Chair should, where possible, reflect a balanced gender representation)

For research awards, external examiners are appointed for specific candidates. External examiners for research students should not normally be appointed more than twice in a four-year period. Such appointments should be made irrespective of external examiners' duties with regard to taught programmes. No distinction should be made, for the purposes of appointing external examiners, between Master's and PhD.

### *Qualities*

External examiners should normally have the following qualities and competencies:

- Recognised expertise in the area which is the subject matter of the thesis which is being examined.
- Experience in supervising postgraduate students and in the examination process of such students.
- Formal academic qualification, normally at doctoral level, and/or a professional qualification at an appropriate level and relevant to the area being examined.
- A willingness to respond to requests to read dissertations within specified time deadlines and to be available to attend such oral examinations and/or examiners meetings as are appropriate.

### *Independence*

It is imperative, for quality assurance, that the external examiner is independent of the University, of its internal examiners, supervisors, and of the candidates presenting themselves for examination. Thus, all external examiners:

- Should not have a close personal relationship with internal examiners, supervisors or a candidate, if it might be construed by a reasonable person as entailing a conflict of interest.
- Should not have been in the employ of the University (in any capacity) in the five years prior to appointment.
- Should not have been a student of the University in the five years prior to appointment.
- Should not, in the past five years, have been a beneficiary of any bursary or remuneration from the University other than from posts such as external examiner; member of accreditation panel; member of quality review panel; member of recruitment/promotions panel or similar.
- Should not have assisted/advised the postgraduate student on the work underpinning the preparation of his/her thesis.