

GUIDE TO THE EXAMINATION OF RESEARCH STUDENTS

1. Composition of the Examining Board

1.1 All Examining Boards for candidates shall consist of the following individuals:

An independent Chair, who will be the Executive Dean or a member of staff with appropriate experience nominated by the Executive Dean. The Chair of the Examining Board is required to chair the oral examination and any meeting of the examiners;

- An external examiner;
- An internal examiner or, in the case of Swansea University employees, a second external examiner (see 'Examination of Staff and Research Students Employed at Swansea University' section below).

The internal and external examiner should normally between them have experience at the level of the thesis to be examined at postgraduate research degree level. For instance, where a proposed external examiner has little or no experience of acting as an external examiner, then the proposed internal examiner must have extensive experience of acting as an examiner. Where the proposed internal examiner is relatively inexperienced, the proposed external examiner must have extensive experience of acting as an examiner.

Collectively, the panel should have examined a minimum of six Viva Voce Examinations at or above the level that is being examined. If it is not possible to convene a panel with this level of experience, an evidenced justification will need to be submitted with the nomination for consideration by the Deputy PVC for PGR.

1.2 Chair of Examining Board

The Chair of the Board shall be independent in the examining process and shall be responsible to the Postgraduate Research Committee for the conduct of the examination. The Chair of the Examining Board is required to chair the oral examination and any meeting of the examiners.

1.2.1 A proposed Chair would normally:

- Be a member of staff employed at Swansea University with sufficient seniority and experience to be able to command authority;
- Have acted as an examiner at, or beyond the level of the thesis to be examined;
- Hold an academic award at, or beyond the level of the thesis to be examined or have equivalent professional experience;
- **Have a clear understanding of the University's regulations and procedures;**
- Have undertaken relevant training regarding supervision and institution-specific policies and supervision procedures.

Any member of staff involved in the supervision of the candidate may not act as a Chair of Examining Board.

1.3 External Examiner

External examiners are nominated by the Executive Dean or nominee, in consultation with the student's supervisors. Faculties/Schools should take due care to avoid establishing reciprocal arrangements which could give rise to a potential lack of objectivity.

1.3.1

Following the introduction of new UK Visas and Immigration controls and requirements, the University must be able to demonstrate that all external examiners are eligible to work in the United Kingdom. At the nomination stage, Faculties/Schools should indicate the basis on which the judgement that the proposed external examiner is eligible to work in the United Kingdom has been made - eg the proposed external examiner is a British citizen or is employed by another institution within the UK (this could exclude those that have obtained a visa for working exclusively at one institution).

1.3.2

A proposed external examiner should:

- Be normally research active and sufficiently experienced to command authority;
- **Be aware of the nature and purpose of the degree for which the candidate is being examined;**
- **Possess specialist knowledge and expertise in the subject of research;**
- Normally have examined a higher degree on at least one previous occasion within their institution as an internal examiner at the same level (see footnote to Nomination of Examining Board below);
- Normally have supervised postgraduate students to, or beyond the level of, the thesis;
- Normally hold the degree for which they are examining or equivalent. If the examiner does not hold a research degree then the examining board must receive sufficient supporting evidence of the individual's suitability for the position;
- Not be appointed where the following circumstances apply, unless exceptional circumstances can be evidenced:
 - Former supervisor or mentor of the candidate;
 - Former member of staff of the University, who has left the University during the candidature period;
 - A sponsor, relative or friend of the candidate;
 - A partner or relative of the supervisor;
 - Had substantial co-authoring or collaborative involvement with the candidate's work or whose own work is the focus of the research project;
 - A member of staff from a department or research organisation where they are involved with Swansea University in a collaborative doctoral provision arrangement under which the candidate in question is studying;
 - Involved in direct substantive collaboration with the candidate's supervisors (i.e. supervisory team), during the candidature period (e.g. more than three co-authored papers where the supervisors and examiner are major contributors).

1.3.3

An examiner from outside the University system may be appropriate where professional expertise is required, provided that such an appointee has suitable experience of research degree examinations. Such examiners may typically be drawn from organisations engaged in research, including but not limited to: local health boards, national museums and galleries, judicial courts and international business organisations.

1.3.4

If an External Examiner from a non UK University is proposed and is unable to demonstrate familiarity with the UK research degree system then the Chair should be experienced and able to brief the External Examiner on the expectations of a research degree submission.

1.3.5

A former member of staff of Swansea University may not be invited to act as an external examiner until at least five years have elapsed since they left the University.

1.3.6

A former student of Swansea University may not be invited to act as an external examiner until at least five years have elapsed since they graduated from the University.

1.3.7

To avoid bias, prejudice or perceived conflict of interest an external examiner must not be appointed if:

- There has been substantive academic communication/collaboration with the candidate (including as a current or former supervisor of the candidate) or the candidate's supervisors in the previous five years that would call into question their ability to exercise objective, impartial and independent judgements;
- They have examined research degrees frequently in the same department/school/faculty;
- The candidate's supervisor has recently served as an external examiner in the proposed external examiner's department/school/faculty;
- They are pastoral tutors, a sponsor, a close professional colleague, relative or friend either at this institution or a previous institution of the candidate;
- They are someone who was examined themselves by the supervisor or a partner or relative of the supervisor;
- They are person whose own work is the focus of the research project;
- If they are from an organisation that is involved in a collaborative provision arrangement under which the candidate is studying.

1.3.8

Number of theses which can be examined by one external examiner:

The number of theses which can be examined by a particular external examiner in a twelve-month period shall normally not exceed three doctoral theses and ten research masters theses. In exceptional circumstances the approval of the University's Dean of Postgraduate Research Programmes (or their representative) is required.

1.4 Internal Examiner

1.4.1

Nominated internal examiners would normally:

- Have a working knowledge of the subject of research;
- Have relevant experience;
- Hold an academic award at the same level they are examining or have equivalent professional experience;
- Be a member of staff employed at Swansea University;
- Not be a candidate for a research degree either at Swansea University or any other institution;
- Not normally have been a student at Swansea University concurrently with the student to be examined;
- Normally, be drawn from the Faculty/School in which the student is enrolled;
- Have undertaken relevant training regarding supervision and institution-specific policies and supervision procedures.

Any member of staff involved in the supervision of the candidate may not act as an internal examiner.

1.4.2

A member of staff who has not acted in the role of internal examiner before shall be required to observe at least one oral examination prior to being appointed as an internal examiner. Any oral examination in the University may be observed by an independent person without express prior permission for the presence of the observer being sought from all parties involved in the oral examination.

1.4.3

If, in exceptional circumstances, it proves impossible to appoint an appropriate internal examiner from within the Faculty/School concerned, the Executive Dean may nominate an internal examiner from another Faculty/School of the University.

1.4.4

If it proves impossible to appoint an appropriate internal examiner from another Faculty/School of the University, the Deputy Pro-Vice Chancellor, Postgraduate Research or their representative may, on the special recommendation of the Executive Dean of Faculty/School concerned, appoint a second external examiner in lieu of an internal examiner. In appointing such an examiner, the Deputy Pro-Vice Chancellor, Postgraduate Research or their representative may take account of, but need not be bound by, the nomination made by the Executive Dean.

1.4.5

The Deputy Pro-Vice Chancellor, Postgraduate Research or their representative shall not consider the appointment of a second external examiner unless the Executive Dean has provided written assurance that all appropriate steps have been taken to appoint an internal examiner from within the University.

1.4.6

To avoid bias, prejudice or perceived conflict of interest an internal examiner must not be appointed if:

- There has been substantive academic communication/collaboration with the candidate (including as a current or former supervisor of the candidate) or the candidate's supervisors in the previous five years that would call into question their ability to exercise objective, impartial and independent judgements;
- They are pastoral tutors, a sponsor, a close professional colleague, relative or of the candidate;
- They are someone who was examined themselves by the supervisor or a partner or relative of the supervisor;
- They are a person whose own work is the focus of the research project.

2. Examination of Staff and Research Students Employed at Swansea University

Where a postgraduate research candidate has been employed by the University at any time up until the examination, a conflict of interest may be perceived to arise in circumstances where the Internal Examiner may be a colleague of the candidate. In such cases, a second External Examiner will be required in place of an Internal Examiner.

2.1

The following exceptions to this regulation apply:

A. Candidates undertaking up to the normal maximum of 6 hours in the working week of casual subject-related employment within the University (see "[Guide to the Employment of Research Students](#)").

B. Candidates having less than 3 months employment within the University up to the date of submission.

C. Candidates employed in an area of the University unrelated to the Faculty/School from which the Internal Examiner is selected (examples include employment within the University Administration or

by a different Faculty/School). In this case the Nomination of Examiners form must be accompanied by a written statement explaining why there is no conflict of interest.

2.2

In certain cases it may become necessary to reconstitute an Examining Board if a candidate takes employment with the University between the date of submission and the date of examination.

3. Nomination of Examining Board

The Executive Dean or nominee should complete a Nomination of Examining Board form, indicating whether the student is a member of staff or not, giving the names of all individuals who have been involved in the supervision of the student.

3.1

The Executive Dean or nominee should provide full contact details for the nominated external examiner. Full details of supervision and examination experience and other relevant information must be provided for all proposed examiners (unless the proposed external examiner has been appointed and acted as a research degree external examiner at Swansea University in the last three years). The information provided should cover:

- Record of successful supervision at the appropriate level;
- Previous experience of research degree examination [1];
- Academic and/or professional qualifications;
- Current and previous academic positions;
- Brief summary of recent publications and research outputs.

3.2

All nominations are scrutinised by the Deputy Pro-Vice Chancellor, Postgraduate Research or their representative. Additional information regarding qualifications and/or expertise of the proposed examiners and the proposed Chair of the Examining Board may be requested should there be any concerns. The Deputy Pro-Vice Chancellor, Postgraduate Research or their representative has the authority to executively approve or refuse the appointment of any proposed examiner or proposed Chair of the Examining Board.

3.3

It is expected that the Faculty/School will secure an informal agreement to act as external examiner from the proposed external examiner before the Executive Dean sends the Nomination of Examining Board form to Academic Services. The proposed external examiner should understand that in accepting a nomination as an external examiner, they are giving a commitment to be available for the duration of the examination process, including a resubmission if appropriate.

3.4

The Nomination of Examining Board form must be signed by the Executive Dean or the Chair of the Faculty/School Research Committee (or equivalent). Where the Executive Dean or Chair of the Faculty/School Research Committee is involved in the supervision of the candidate, then a Deputy Executive Dean or their representative's signature should be obtained.

3.5

If the thesis is to be submitted and examined in a language other than English/Welsh (permission to do so should be obtained at the time of confirmation of candidature, see [Guide to Progress Monitoring of Research Students](#)), the Executive Dean must ensure that all members of the Examining Board will be able to take a full and active part in the examination. The Faculty/School must submit all requests to be examined in Welsh to Academic Services to arrange for translation purposes.

[1] If the proposed external examiner has not acted as an external examiner before, there must be evidence of experience of acting as an internal examiner of a higher degree and the proposed internal examiner must have experience of acting as both an internal examiner and as an external examiner.

4. General Guidance on the Composition of the Examining Board

General Guidance on the Composition of the Examining Board

Lack of previous experience of examining a research degree on the part of one of the examiners must be compensated for by extensive experience on the part of the other examiner. For instance, where a proposed external examiner has little or no experience of acting as an external examiner, then the proposed internal examiner must have extensive experience of acting as an examiner. Where the proposed internal examiner is relatively inexperienced, the proposed external examiner must have extensive experience of acting as an examiner.

Collectively, the panel should have examined a minimum of six Viva Voce Examinations at or above the level that is being examined. If it is not possible to convene a panel with this level of experience, an evidenced justification will need to be submitted with the nomination for consideration by the Deputy PVC for Postgraduate Research.

4.1

In all cases the Chair of the Examining Board must have sufficient seniority and experience and must be well acquainted with Swansea University Research Degree Regulations and the Swansea University approach to research degrees.

5. Confirmation of Appointment of Examining Board

5.1 External Examiner

Academic Services send a letter to the external examiner confirming the appointment which is copied to the Executive Dean concerned. Academic Services also sends an expenses claim form on which the Examiner may claim their fees and expenses at the completion of the examination process.

5.1.1

In addition to the external examiners fee the University will cover genuine expenses (travel and subsistence) up to a maximum of £300 (actual receipted expenditure only) incurred by the external examiner. Faculties/Schools will be asked to cover anything above this amount. The University will normally only cover expenses incurred in the United Kingdom. The University will not cover expenses not incurred directly by the external examiner (for example a meal for any other individual).

5.2 Internal Examiner and Chair of Examining Board

Academic Services will inform the Executive Dean whether the Examining Board has been approved.

6. Arrangements for Examination

6.1

Faculty/School Responsibilities and Distribution of Examination Documents

On appointment of both examiners, it is the Faculty/School's responsibility to supply each examiner with:

- Copies of the relevant regulations;
- One electronic copy of the candidate's thesis (which might be supplemented with a temporary bound version, if required).;
- One copy of the Guide to the Examination of Research Students;
- One copy of the Guide to the Submission and Presentation of a Thesis for Research Students;
- The Report and Result Forms necessary for the conduct of the examination.

The Faculty/School also has responsibility to provide the contact details of each member of the Examining Board.

7. Academic Misconduct

An Examiner, who, either in the course of the examining process or subsequently, considers that a candidate has engaged in academic misconduct, shall immediately report the circumstances in writing to the Chair of the Examining Board concerned.

8. Examination Arrangements

An appointed Convenor and Secretary shall be responsible for ensuring that the correct administrative procedures for the submission and examination of the thesis are carried out. The Executive Dean of the Faculty/School concerned shall act as Convenor & Secretary or shall delegate these functions to a senior member of the staff e.g. a member of staff responsible for the management of postgraduate research students or the Chair of Research/Postgraduate Committee.

8.1

A date that is mutually acceptable to all parties should be set for the oral examination. All parties should be given at least two weeks notice of the date of the oral examination. If any party becomes

unavailable due to exceptional circumstances, the oral examination should be postponed. In extremely exceptional cases a request to hold the oral examination by electronic means may be submitted to the Progression and Awards Board for approval (see Conduct of Oral Examination by Electronic Means below). If a student fails to attend the oral examination without prior notification, the student will be deemed to have not met the award or lower degree requirements and the Examining Board should return a recommendation of Not Approved (see Outcomes of examination for each degree below).

9. Timescale of Examination

Both examiners are asked to report upon the work in a timely manner. The normal expectation is that members of the examining board will complete and submit the report and result form on the day of the examination board or no later than one week from the date of the examination board; this would also apply for a resubmitted thesis. Payment of fees and expenses will not be processed until a completed report and result form has been received.

9.1

All oral examinations must take place within six months of the date of submission of the thesis. The Progression and Awards Board monitors submission dates and students who are not examined within six months of the date of submission will be deemed to have not complied and will not be approved for the award or lower degree.

10. Duties of the Examiners

Examiners are required to conduct an oral examination for all candidates who have submitted a thesis for a research degree. As a rule, a resubmitted thesis must be examined by a second oral examination. In exceptional cases, the requirement for a second oral examination may be waived at the examiners discretion if a pass is agreed by them on resubmission. In this scenario, the Chair of the Examining Board will inform the student that the requirement for a second oral examination has been waived. It is expected that all oral examinations would normally be held on a face-to-face basis, with all concerned present in the same room on the Swansea University campus, at the same time. Any exceptions would either have to be agreed as an exception or agreed to reflect the nature of the degree e.g. those students studying under Method 'D' (collaborative). If the viva examination is held via electronic means, care should be taken to ensure the conduct of the viva mirrors where possible the examination processes and procedures as if carried out in person.

11. Particular Role of Internal Examiner

The internal examiner must decide whether the student's research work and knowledge meet the standard which would normally be expected of a student in the Faculty/School submitting for that degree.

12. Particular Role of External Examiner

The external examiner must decide whether the student's research work and knowledge are of a standard which are comparable to those of students being examined at other institutions for the same degree.

13. Particular Role of Chair of Examining Board

It is the responsibility of the Chair to ensure that the process is rigorous, fair, reliable and consistent with University regulations and procedures. In the event of a review of an examination decision or an appeal, the Chair is required to provide a written report on the conduct of the examination as necessary.

13.1

During the examination process, the examiners shall:

- Consider the thesis and abstract submitted by the candidate. Any part of the thesis which has already been accepted, or is being concurrently submitted, for any other degree or qualification in the University, or elsewhere shall be excluded from the examination;
- Report on the scope, character and quality of the work submitted;
- Satisfy themselves that the candidate possesses a good general knowledge of the particular field of learning within which the thesis falls.

14. Presentation of Thesis

Members of the Examining Board should bear in mind the content of the Guide to Submission and Presentation of a Thesis for Research Students when assessing a thesis. The Faculty/School will provide access to the Guide during the viva voce as required.

15. Report and Result Forms

The Examiners' Report and Result forms are intended as instruments for the reports of the examiners and the Chair of the Examining Board, and are used by the Examining Board to make a formal recommendation to Swansea University on the outcome of the examination process. Examiners are advised that under the terms of Freedom of Information Act 2000, students have the right to request access to any comments made about them in these reports.

16. Conduct of the Examination

The external examiner should complete Section 1.1 of the Report form (External Examiner's Report on Thesis) and take the whole form to the oral examination. Some Faculties/Schools may permit an electronic copy to be sent ahead of the examination. The Chair of the Examining Board should arrange for the internal examiner's report to be typed in, or otherwise attached to, Section 2 (Internal Examiner's Report).

16.1

The form and content of the examiners' reports should be sufficiently detailed to allow the Examination Board 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. Ideally, the report should include, near to its beginning, a statement of what the thesis purports to do, and an account of what it actually covers. Evaluative comments should be as full as possible and should include an indication of strengths as well as weaknesses, limitations and lacunae.

16.2

The Chair of the Examination Board is responsible to ensure that the examiners should meet before the oral examination to compare notes on their reports on the thesis, and agree the strategy for the viva. The Chair of the Examining Board must be present at any such meeting. The Faculty/School is expected to ensure a room and sufficient hospitality is in place for this pre-examiners meeting.

Even where both examiners' thesis reports indicate that the thesis is of the required standard, the student must not be told at the beginning of the oral examination that the degree will be awarded. The examiners must satisfy themselves through the oral examination that the student is the author of the thesis and completely understands its contents.

17. Conduct of the Viva Voce

The Chair of the Examining Board must ensure that the oral examination is conducted in an open and fair manner in accordance with the University's regulations. The Chair should make sure that the student is treated courteously and fairly, and with all due consideration and attention to minimising their discomfort, to enable them to give of their best. The Chair should ensure that the student is given a fair opportunity to defend their work and that the examiners are aware of any extenuating circumstances which have a bearing on the student's case.

17.1

The Chair should meet the student in private prior to the oral examination to ask the student whether there are any health or other personal circumstances, not previously notified via the supervisor, that might impact on the student's performance in the oral examination.

17.2

It is the responsibility of the student to make the Examining Board aware of extenuating circumstances which could have an effect on their examination. Academic appeals based on extenuating circumstances which could have been brought to the attention of the Examining Board prior to oral examination shall not be considered.

17.3

The Chair should explain the purpose of the oral examination to the examiners and the student. The purpose of the oral examination is:

- To enable the examiners to assure themselves that the thesis is the student's own work;
- To give the student the opportunity to defend the thesis and to clarify any obscurities in it;
- To enable the examiners to assess the student's contextual knowledge in his or her particular field of learning.

17.4

The examiners are not only assessing the thesis in the oral examination, but the candidate's ability to defend it, and to relate the contents of the thesis to the existing body of knowledge within the particular field.

17.5

The Chair should ensure that the examiners and the student are aware of the University regulations and guides dealing with the examination of a research thesis. The Chair should explain the structure of the oral examination and clarify the roles of the examiners and any other individuals present. If any other individuals are present, the Chair should confirm that the student and, if appropriate, the examiners have no objections to the presence of those individuals. In such a case the student should sign a statement on the Report form indicating that they have given permission for those individuals to be present. In some cases specific programmes may require that the oral examination is held a public forum. In such cases permission need not be sought for the presence of members of the audience. During the oral examination, the Chair should only interject to provide advice on the University regulations or where there is evidence of any activity that is not in line with the regulations.

[Guide to the Examination of Research Students - Swansea University](#)
[Guide to the Examination of Research Students - Swansea University](#)

17.6

For examination of the Professional Doctorate (or some Collaborative/Joint Degrees) the student is required to give a verbal presentation of their work to an audience including a member, or members, of the thesis Examining Board and representatives of the associated professional/industrial organisation prior to the start of the oral examination. Students pursuing the EdD are not required to deliver a presentation.

17.7

Furthermore, candidates will be assessed in accordance with the agreements in place for jointly delivered and jointly awarded research degrees. In such cases, the composition of the Examining Board is likely to be adjusted to incorporate examiners from the partner institution. In addition, the assessment procedures might be based on the procedures of the partner institution, possibly involving a public defence of the thesis. Typically, the rules of the home institution would apply.

17.8

At the oral examination, the student should be encouraged to display their knowledge and abilities to best effect, and the strengths as well as the weaknesses of the thesis should be acknowledged and explored. At an early stage in the proceedings, the student should be given an opportunity to explain precisely what the thesis is intended to achieve and what they believe to be its significance as a contribution to knowledge. If there appears to be a major discrepancy between the candidate's aims and the content of the actual thesis, the reasons for this should be explored.

17.9

The student should be asked to explain their choice of title when there appears to be an imperfect correspondence with the contents of the thesis. The student should also be given the opportunity to explain any apparent failure to use important materials, whether primary or secondary, or neglect of relevant approaches or methodologies.

17.10

It is important that, where a thesis reveals significant deficiencies which might lead to a report which is not unequivocally favourable, a representative sample of these should be drawn to the student's attention and time for explanation and defence allowed for in the oral examination.

17.11

When the examiners feel that they have exhausted their lines of questioning, the Chair should ensure that the student has nothing further to add or ask. The student (and the supervisor, if present) should then be requested to leave the room to allow the examiners to discuss the oral examination.

18. Process After Viva

The External Examiner should complete Section 1.2 (*External Examiner's Report on the Oral Examination*), and, if appropriate, 1.3 (*Matters of General Concern and Interest*)[2].

18.1

The examiners should discuss the student's performance in the oral examination and consider which of the available recommendations is most appropriate (see ***Outcomes of examination for each degree*** below). The Chair should ensure that the recommendation chosen complies with University regulations.

18.2

The external should then, together with the internal examiner, complete Section 3 (*Joint Report by External and Internal Examiners*). The report should draw together any disparate views on the thesis which may have been expressed by the examiners in their individual reports. A brief agreed view on the candidate's principal strengths and weaknesses, the approach to the topic, and on the performance at the oral examination might also be expressed.

18.3

The Chair of the Examining Board should complete Section 4 (*Report by the Chair of Examining Board*), commenting on the conduct of the oral examination and noting any procedural issues. If the examiners have recommended that the thesis should be resubmitted for examination without a second oral examination, a clear justification for this decision should be presented in the Chair's report and should be counter-signed by both examiners.

18.4

For examination of the Professional Doctorate and the PhD Extended Period of Study, the Chair of the Examining Board or the Degree Programme Director should complete Section 5 (*Confirmation of Satisfactory Completion by the Candidate of the Training and Practical Elements of the Professional Doctorate Programme and PhD Extended Period of Study*), confirming that the candidate has completed the training and practical element of the degree. A separate report detailing the training modules undertaken for the degree and the outcomes achieved should be attached to the Report and Result Forms. The examiners should also complete Section 6 (*Report of the Verbal Presentation by the Candidate*), confirming that the candidate has completed the verbal presentation element to the satisfaction of the examiners.

18.5

For examination of the Master of Research (MRes), the Chair of the Examining Board should complete Section 5 (*Confirmation of Satisfactory Completion by the Candidate of the Taught and Practical Elements of the MRes Programme*), confirming that the candidate has completed the taught and practical element of the degree. A separate report detailing the taught modules undertaken for the degree and the outcomes achieved should be attached to the Report and Result Forms.

18.6

The examiners should then arrange with the Chair of the Examining Board for the completion and signature of the final form (*Result Form*). The appropriate recommendation option should be indicated by means of ticking the relevant box. If corrections are required, the external examiner will normally be required to scrutinise the corrections on behalf of the Examining Board unless otherwise indicated. The examiners and the Chair of the Examining Board should sign the Result Form and the Chair should ensure that the form is dated.

18.7

The student should be invited to re-enter the room and the Chair should inform the student of the recommendation of the Examining Board. The Chair should explain the implications of the recommendation and clearly indicate any dates for providing corrections or for re-submitting the thesis as well as identifying which examiner will be responsible for approving corrections (if applicable).

[2] This section allows External Examiners to report any issues of concern or good practice during the Examination Process. This information is relayed directly to the Chair of the Progression and Awards Board to take any necessary action and/or report to the Progression and Awards Board. The Chair of the Progression and Awards Board will write to the Examiner concerned on the outcome of considering the issue of concern or good practice.

19. Informing the Progression and Awards Board

After the oral examination is completed and all sections of the Report and Result Forms have been signed, the Chair should ensure that the original Report and Result Forms are sent to Academic Services immediately. The viva outcome should also be recorded on the Research Management System. The recommendation of the Examining Board must be presented to the Progression and Awards Board for ratification before a result letter can be prepared. Once confirmation that all conditions have been met is received, the student will be informed by Academic Services of the formal outcome of the examination.

INSERT FROM: [Structure of Examination Board - Swansea University](#)

1.4 University Progression and Awards Board

1.4.1

The University Progression and Award Board will act under the authority delegated to it by the Learning Teaching and Quality Committee, and oversee the University's assessment process and confirm marks and all progression and award decisions. In addition, the Board will be responsible for monitoring the quality and standards of awards may in the University name. All awards recommended by an Examining Board must be conferred by the University Award and Progression Board before Certificates and Transcripts can be issued.

1.4.2

University Progression and Awards Board – Terms of reference

- To monitor and ensure adherence to the requirements of the University's academic and assessment regulations by progression and award boards;
- To approve recommendations on the awarding of degrees and other qualifications;
- To report to the Learning Teaching and Quality Committee on all awards bestowed by the University;
- To approve recommendations from Faculty/School and other relevant boards, on progression issues with reference to the assessment regulations;
- To receive and consider reports from all Faculty/School progression and award boards and other relevant boards;
- To determine cases where a procedural irregularity has occurred during the proceedings of progression and award boards and where a recommendation has been made contrary to Regulations;
- To make recommendations on the revocation of awards;
- To review, on an annual basis, issues relating to the assessment process;
- To approve recommendations on the award of prizes;
- To oversee the approval of nominations for the Examining Board for postgraduate research students;
- To make recommendations on the bestowing of aegrotat and posthumous awards;
- To consider External Examiners' reports and ensure appropriate responses are made and to report to the Learning, Teaching and Quality Committee any issues of concern.

END OF INSERT

20. Disputes Between Examiners on Recommendation

When the recommendation of an external examiner gives rise to a case of dispute between the external examiner and internal examiner, it is within the power of the Chair of the Progression and Awards Board at the request of the Chair of the Examining Board, to resort to another external examiner who would be asked to arbitrate. The Chair of the Progression and Awards Board may take into account any written reports submitted by members of the Examining Board. In choosing a second external examiner the Chair of the Progression and Awards Board may also take into account, but need not be bound by, the nomination (if any) of the Examining Board for a second external examiner. A decision on whether or not to reconvene the Examining Board would fall within the discretion of this second external examiner whose decision on all matters is final.

In cases of dispute between the external and internal examiners, the Report and Result form should not be signed until the dispute has been resolved.

21. Communicating with the Student After the Oral Examination

The student must be informed of the outcome and have implications of the recommendation explained at the end of the oral examination.

22. OUTCOMES OF EXAMINATION FOR EACH DEGREE

22.7 Outcomes for the Degree of Master of Arts by Research (MA by Research) and Master of Science by Research (MSc by Research)

1. Pass-No corrections

(1 month to submit a final version of the thesis)

Definition: The thesis is deemed to be of Master of Arts by Research (MA by Research) and Master of Science by Research (MSc by Research) standard in terms of substance and structure.

2. Minor corrections being submitted within 3 months; Pass

(normally to be approved by internal examiner)

Definition: The thesis is deemed to be of MA by Research/MSc by Research standard in terms of substance and structure; corrections concern matters of detail. No further research or any other substantial work needs to be conducted. Minor corrections typically include typos, clarifying points, rephrasing, editing, adding paragraphs and correcting references.

3. Substantial corrections and/or amendments to be submitted within 6 months; Pass

this is not an option for re-submitted theses

(normally to be approved by internal and external examiner, or at the discretion of the examining board by internal examiner only);

Definition: The thesis is deemed to be of MA by Research/MSc by Research standard in terms of substance, but in order to pass, significant but clearly specifiable and quantifiable amendments are required in terms of a) the presentation of research, e.g. concerning introduction/conclusion; or b) the structure, e.g. concerning the re-arranging of data/sections/chapters; or c) the addition of new material not exceeding one chapter in length – where such amendments are judged by the examining board to be achievable within a 6-month period.

4. Decision suspended pending re-examination following resubmission within 12 months

this is not an option for re-submitted theses

(normally to be re-examined by the same team of internal and external examiners. As a rule, there will be a second viva; however, upon inspection of the resubmitted thesis, examiners may use their discretion to waive the second viva).

Definition: The thesis is not deemed to be of MA by Research/MSc by Research standard in its present form; however, in terms of substance, there is real potential, on the basis of what has already been presented, that the candidate could, within a period of 12 months, present a thesis of appropriate standard; amendments/alterations/additions required may concern both substance and presentation.

5. Fail; not approved for the award or a lower research degree

(as immediate option and option after resubmission)

Definition: The thesis as presented and defended is not deemed to be of MA by Research/MSc by Research standard actually or potentially.

[22.8 Outcomes for the Degree of Master of Research \(MRes\)](#)

[22.9 Outcomes for the Degree of Doctor of Business Administration \(DBA\)](#)

[23. Information to Accompany the Outcomes of Examination for the Above Degrees](#)

[24. Case: Approved with Corrections/Amendments \(also relevant for Not Approved, but Approved for Lower Award with Corrections/Amendments\)](#)

[25. Case: Not Approved, but Permitted to Resubmit \(also relevant for Not Approved, but Permitted to Resubmit for a Lower Degree\)](#)

[26. Case: Not Approved](#)

[27. Conduct of Oral Examinations by Electronic Means](#)

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