

18 February 2009

GUIDELINES FOR FACULTY POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH COMMITTEES APPROVAL OF THESIS EXAMINERS FOR RESEARCH STUDENTS

Preamble

Thesis examiners are nominated by the Chair of Examiners following the recommendations and supporting documentation provided by the supervisor of the thesis.

It is the role of the Chair of Examiners to satisfy themselves that the examiners nominated have academic standing, knowledge and experience commensurate with the level of degree which they are examining, and that sufficient documentary evidence is provided for this judgement to be made to the satisfaction of the Faculty Postgraduate Research Committee. In particular, if there is any variance from the normal requirements for examiner expertise as stipulated below, a compelling case needs to be made to justify the variance in relation to the nature of the thesis being examined and the suitability of the examiner to fulfil that task.

It is the responsibility of the Chair of Examiners in conjunction with independent oversight and scrutiny by the Faculty Postgraduate Research Committee to ensure that high quality and impartial examiners are appointed, who across the panel of examiners as a whole have the necessary depth of knowledge and experience to enable a comprehensive assessment to be made about the quality of the work that has been undertaken in the thesis being examined.

Section 1 – Faculty Advice Officers to check

1. That the number of examiners required for each degree and discipline conforms to requirements, as listed below:
 - Master by Research and Doctor of Psychology students – two external examiners required;
 - Master by Research by performance or exhibition – two external examiners and one nominated reserve examiner required;
 - Doctor of Philosophy, Doctor of Business Administration, Doctor of Education, Doctor of Social Work – three external examiners required;
 - Doctor of Philosophy by performance or exhibition – three external examiners and one nominated reserve examiner required.

In some cases, there is a need subsequently to appoint an additional examiner. In these cases, the additional examiner nomination form is used, and the Faculty Postgraduate Research Committee will follow the same process to approve the additional examiner.

2. That the Nomination of Examiner form has been completed:
 - The required number of examiners have been nominated for the degree (see above);
 - All examiner contact details listed;
 - All candidate and supervisor details listed;
 - All signatures included.
3. That the required documents and their contents are completed and attached:
 - A memo, of not more than two pages, from the supervisor:
 - justifying the choice of examiners nominated, and
 - stating either that there has been no previous contact between examiner(s) and candidate OR detailing any prior involvement between the student and examiner(s);

- A summary for each nominated examiner (of not more than two pages) regarding experience in research and research training, and including recent publications;
- The abstract of the candidate's thesis.

Section 2 – Faculty Postgraduate Research Committee to check

4. Consider the qualifications, experience and expertise of each examiner and the balance of relevant expertise across the panel of nominated examiners:
 - No prejudicial association and/or conflict of interest between the examiner(s) and the research through the supervisor(s) and/or the candidate (Refer to VU's existing policies on conflict of interest for guidance on what constitutes a conflict of interest). At the minimum, the supervisor(s) should not have collaborated with the examiner(s) within the past five years;
 - Sufficient evidence presented to illustrate that each examiner is an expert in a field relevant to the thesis;
 - Examiners nominated normally hold at least the educational qualification of the degree being examined;
 - Examiners nominated are normally associated with a university or research institution;
 - Ex VU staff members may be considered to assess a thesis but must show there has been no association with the project;
 - Examiners nominated are normally not from the same institution as other examiners nominated to assess the thesis;
 - Doctoral candidates should normally have their thesis assessed by at least one overseas examiner;
 - Evidence must be provided that the panel of examiners as a whole have appropriate knowledge of the field, methodology and experience with research training and examination.
 - Where normally expected requirements have been varied there is clear and convincing justification for this.

CHECKLIST FOR THE APPROVAL OF RESEARCH EXAMINERS
FACULTY POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH COMMITTEES

SECTION 1 – STUDENT DETAILS

Student Name:	_____
Student ID:	_____
Thesis title:	_____ _____
Abstract Provided:	YES/NO
<i>Please tick the appropriate box</i>	
Either:	
MRes / DPsych / DAppPsych Candidate – 2 Examiners Nominated	<input type="checkbox"/>
MRes (performance/exhibition) Candidate – 2 Examiners and 1 Reserve Nominated	<input type="checkbox"/>
PhD, DBA, EdD Candidate – 3 Examiners Nominated	<input type="checkbox"/>
PhD (performance/exhibition) Candidate – 3 Examiners and 1 Reserve Nominated	<input type="checkbox"/>
OR:	
Additional Examiner Nominated (Please ensure that the Additional Examiner Nomination Form is completed)	<input type="checkbox"/>

SECTION 2 – EXAMINER DETAILS

	Examiner 1	Examiner 2	Examiner 3	Reserve/ Additional Examiner
All examiner contact details listed	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
No more than two pages per examiner:				
Listing recent publications (or equivalent for creative works)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Summarising experience in research and research training	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Level of educational qualification	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
No prejudicial association and/or conflict of interest between examiner and research	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Supporting statement from supervisor				<input type="checkbox"/>
Each examiner located at a different institution (or justification provided, including if ex VU)				<input type="checkbox"/>
Each examiner associated with a University or research institution (or justification provided)				<input type="checkbox"/>
At least one examiner is located overseas (doctoral candidates only or justification provided)				<input type="checkbox"/>
Appropriate spread of expertise and knowledge				<input type="checkbox"/>
Appropriate experience and knowledge of research training				<input type="checkbox"/>

APPROVAL

The Faculty Postgraduate Research Committee approves the examiners as listed on the Nomination Form (attached).

Signature of Faculty Committee Chair

Date

The completed form is to be appended to the front of the Nominated Examiner form and for all doctoral students forwarded to the Office for Postgraduate Research. Where necessary, please attach supporting documentation.