

Supervisor guidance on the appointment of examiners

To ensure the good standing of the King's College London research degrees, the examiners appointed for each student must be able, and be seen to be able, to make an independent assessment of the student and their thesis.

Examiners are appointed by the Research Degrees Examination Board following review by Subject Area Boards. The Subject Area Board advises on the academic expertise and suitability of the nominees; and checks for any potential conflicts of interest (e.g. collaborations, recent publications within three years, joint grant funding). Nominees will be required to state if they know the student in any capacity.

Full guidance on the appointment of examiners and conduct of research degree examinations can be found in the [Academic Regulations](#) (6.10 – 6.13)

The following is provided to aid with the interpretation and application of the regulations:

Criteria for appointment

1. Both examiners shall be experts in the field of the thesis and be able to make an independent assessment of the student. Many theses are interdisciplinary, and the aim should be to appoint a team of examiners who, between them, cover all aspects of the work to be presented by the student. In exceptional circumstances it may be necessary to appoint three examiners to achieve this.
2. It is accepted that examiners may be acquainted with the supervisor, and sometimes the student. This in itself is not a bar to acting as an examiner, however there should be no personal link between the examiner and the student.
3. The examiners should have examined at least three research degrees in the UK of appropriate level between them. If this is not possible, the supervisor should provide a clear justification for the nomination and an independent chair may be appointed. Further guidance on appointing an Independent Chair can be found [here](#)
4. The examiners appointed should not have had any significant research or other contact with the student or supervisor which might inhibit a completely objective examination. Nor should they have had any role in the assessment or supervision of the student i.e. the student's transfer of registration from the MPhil to the PhD degree.

5. Both examiners shall normally be external to the university.
6. Supervisors are encouraged to draw their nominated examiners from the wider academic community but may in exceptional circumstances also nominate an examiner internal to King's College London. Where an internal examiner is nominated, the reasoning must be justified and confirmation provided that they are genuinely independent of the student's course of study. In the case of a student who is also a member of the academic staff of the College, both examiners must be external to King's College London.
7. Former lay members of Council, students or employees of King's College London shall not normally be appointed as external examiners before a period of three academic years has elapsed. Retired teachers, who are still active in their fields, often retain close links with their former departments and may be appointed as internal examiners. Note: it is necessary to guard against an individual being appointed as an internal examiner on one occasion and an external on another, which would imply that there is no distinction between the two.
8. Reciprocal examining with a supervisor from another institution is not permitted

The repeated nomination of an examiner by a supervisor will not normally be permitted within a two-year period.
9. The student's supervisor shall not be an examiner;
10. An internal examiner will not have been involved in the supervision of the student during the research period;
11. An internal examiner will not have been part of the upgrade assessment panel of the student;
12. An internal examiner will not have been supervised by the student's supervisors for their own degree or post-doc;
13. An internal examiner will not have a close personal relationship with the student's supervisor;
14. A supervisor will not be able to use the same internal examiner more than once per academic year.

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