

Briefing for an External Examiner

Where the external examiner will be undertaking their first appointment as an external examiner in the UK a briefing must be provided by the School before the viva.

The guidance overleaf is designed to guide you when providing a briefing to an external examiner who will be undertaking their first UK PGR examination. It is not intended as a prescriptive list but suggests areas and topics which might be covered. This is intended to familiarise the Examiner with the requirements of the UK system and the expectations of the University of Leeds (i.e., the research degree awarding body for Leeds Trinity Research Degrees) and should be a dialogue with the opportunity for questions. It must be provided by a senior, experienced internal examiner who is independent of the candidature and the examination. A face-to-face meeting before the viva is the preferred format (although phone/video conferencing software is acceptable where this is not practicable).

After the briefing, this report should be completed and returned to the Research Office research@leedstrinity.ac.uk alongside the final joint report of the examiners and individual preliminary reports.

I confirm I have provided a briefing as follows:

Name of PGR:	
Name of External Examiner	
Date of briefing:	

If there are any general comments or observations you wish to make in this case please include these in the text box below.

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This report should be attached to the final, joint report of the examiners prepared after the oral examination and should be returned to the Research Office.

Signed	
Print Name	
Date	

Briefings for External Examiners¹

Programme structure

External Examiner is key feature of UK quality assurance processes.

Please consult the learning outcomes for the relevant research degree programme for examination.

Examiners are asked to bear in mind that a PhD thesis represents research that may reasonably be expected of a capable and diligent student within the standard period of study. A different emphasis will be needed where the thesis is practice-led research or a Masters by Research/MPhil submission and also if part-time/split-site

Doctorate award (Guidance reviewed and agreed by the Examinations Group April 2018) at Leeds: examiners must identify and report on evidence of originality, independent critical ability and matter suitable for publication (peer-reviewed publishable quality in the discipline).

Before the viva

Complete a separate, preliminary report after evaluating the candidate's thesis. Do not make a recommendation at this stage. Reports exchanged before viva to help plan format & questions

The viva

Purpose of the viva: to ensure that the work reaches the University standards for the degree; that the work has been written and is understood by the candidate and to place the research in the context of the wider field.

Closed viva: only the PGR, the examiners, the independent chair (if appointed) and the supervisor (if agreed) in attendance.

Both the internal and external examiners take an equal and active role in the viva.

Examiners must not reveal a recommendation to the PGR in advance of the viva.

Examiners must reach a joint recommendation after the viva about whether the award of the degree can be recommended, based on their assessment of the written thesis combined with the PGR's performance in the viva.

Criteria for award of the degree: e.g. doctorate degree - evidence of originality, independent critical ability and matter suitable for publication (peer-reviewed quality in the discipline).¹

Viva is an opportunity to raise questions in areas where examiners are not satisfied with the thesis and encourage the PGR to provide convincing evidence that the criteria for award can be met.

After the viva

The PGR must be advised of the examiners' recommendation within 24 hours.

A joint examiners' report is required following the viva which must indicate the examiners' recommendation and how the candidate has met (or not) the criteria for the award of the degree. This must provide specific examples from the thesis and viva.

Possible recommendations examiners can make (including corrections, referral & MPhil award on PhD). If referral: notes for guidance must be prepared. These will be sent to the candidate.