

## **Instructions for External Examiners, AVC PhD Examinations**

1. Thank you for considering our invitation to serve as an External Examiner for a PhD Examination. Should you accept this invitation, the following is an overview of requirements of you as an External Examiner.
  - a) Please inform (by email) the Associate Dean, AVC Graduate Studies and Research, as soon as possible if you are available and willing to participate in the examination committee for this student and which of the proposed dates would be best for you.
  - b) In the majority of cases, the participation of the external examiner is through virtual connections (e.g. Zoom or Teams). If this invitation is for in-person attendance, this will be explicit in our request.
  - c) Please provide written assurance that you are not in conflict of interest with regard to the candidate, and that you have not had any collaborations with the supervisor or co-supervisor or student over the previous five years.
  - d) Until completion of the examination, you are requested to refrain from communication regarding any details related to the thesis or examination with the candidate or their supervisor(s), except (when necessary) through the AVC Associate Dean GSR.
  
2. An electronic copy of the student's thesis (pdf format) will be emailed to you at least 4 weeks before the date of the Examination. Within 1 week of receiving the thesis, please communicate to Associate Dean AVC-GSR Office regarding your opinion of the overall acceptability of the thesis going forward for examination. The student and the Examination Committee will then be informed that the exam will proceed. This does not commit your final decision on acceptability, but it allows us to finalize the date for the examination to occur.
  
3. A brief written report must be submitted to the GS&R office by email at least 7 days prior to the examination date. The report (3 pages or less) normally includes a discussion of the scientific significance of the thesis with comments regarding its theoretical framework, methodology, findings, and interpretations. The report should consider its academic standard and quality, not quantity, reflecting that the candidate meets the minimum requirements to qualify as a researcher, considering the candidate's formulation of research questions, logical and original approaches to testing stated hypotheses, and understanding of current methods and their limitations. Do not list your questions for the student in this document. The Chair of the Examination

Committee will share a copy of the report with the student and the other members of the examination committee, which may include the student's supervisor.

4. Most of the detailed comments, typographical errors, suggestions for improving the writing, etc. can be discussed with the candidate during or after the examination as appropriate. Following successful completion of the requirements of the candidate for the degree, your report will be provided to the candidate's supervisor (if they are not part of the Examination Committee) and their Department Chair to inform their research program.

At the conclusion of the PhD Examination, the Committee must grade the defense as "satisfactory" or "unsatisfactory". The process is explained in the attached guidelines and will be explained to you prior to the examination.

5. If the Examination has been graded "satisfactory", we will arrange for an approval process. The Chair of the Examination Committee and other members of the Examination Committee can sign the Certification of Examination page at that time or at a later date once agreed corrections are considered complete by the Chair of the Examination Committee.
6. After the final thesis has been approved, an electronic copy will be available to you if you indicate your desire to receive a copy.

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