

THE CHINESE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG
Graduate School

Guidelines on External Examiner System
(Research Postgraduate Programmes)

1. Appointment

- 1.1 External Examiners shall be appointed for Research Postgraduate Programmes. They shall not be members of the academic staff of this University and shall not have taken part in the teaching of the candidates. In accordance with a Senate resolution passed in October 1986, a former academic staff member who has left the University for less than 3 years is not eligible for appointment.
- 1.2 An External Examiner, normally a person of high academic qualifications with considerable and recent experience in university teaching at Senior Lecturer rank of a university adopting academic ranking of the Commonwealth system or Associate Professor rank of a university adopting academic ranking of the American system, is appointed by the University Council in consultation with the Senate upon the recommendation of the Department Board concerned. In special circumstances, an External Examiner without university affiliation is appointed on the basis of relevant professional experience.
- 1.3 External Examiners are appointed on a yearly basis. They will not be required to visit Hong Kong unless otherwise stated in the appointment letter.
- 1.4 With effect from the 2020-21 academic year, the requirement of appointing External Examiners for assessing theses leading to an M.Phil.¹ becomes optional. Graduate Divisions have the discretion to decide if appointing External Examiners as members of the Thesis Assessment Committees for M.Phil.¹ theses is needed. If any External Examiner will be appointed, the Graduate Division concerned should ensure that the appropriate policy and procedures are properly implemented.

2. Responsibilities

2.1. Doctoral Degrees

2.1.1. External Examiners for Assessing Theses Leading to a Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.)/Doctor of Education (Ed.D.)

- (a) The External Examiner is appointed to the appropriate Thesis Assessment Committee set up for each candidate by the Graduate Council on the recommendation of the Graduate Panel concerned to evaluate the candidate's thesis for acceptance and to provide the candidate with an opportunity to defend it. The Committee normally consists of at least three Internal Examiners (including the candidate's own Supervisor, the Head of Graduate Division or his/her nominee, and a third Internal Examiner from within or outside the Graduate Division) and an External Examiner.
- (b) The External Examiner will read the thesis and present a written report thereon to the Graduate School for transmission to the appropriate Thesis Assessment Committee. The report will take account of the following aspects of the thesis: the problem or topic of study, research design or methodology, presentation, originality of thought and judgment, and quality as a contribution to knowledge, where appropriate. The report will state whether the thesis meets the standard for the award of the degree sought.
- (c) If the External Examiner is a local resident or happens to be in Hong Kong at the

¹ Note: The arrangement of optional External Examiner also applies to M.F.A. and M.Mus. degrees.

examination time, he/she will be requested to participate in the oral examination on the candidate's thesis conducted by the Thesis Assessment Committee.

- (d) Where it is impracticable for the External Examiner to be present at the oral examination, an additional External Examiner who can attend will be appointed. The additional External Examiner will have the same responsibilities as the first External Examiner.
- (e) After assessing the thesis and attending the oral examination (if applicable), the External Examiner will give comments and a grade by completing the Assessment Report Form.
- (f) The report may be returned by fax or email, to the Graduate School for transmission to the Head of the Graduate Division concerned. As for the thesis, the External Examiner may return only those pages for which there are comments or suggestions for amendments.

2.1.2. External Examiners for Assessing Composition Portfolios Leading to a Doctor of Music (D.Mus.)

- (a) The External Examiner is appointed to the appropriate Assessment Committee set up for each candidate by the Graduate Council on the recommendation of the Graduate Panel concerned to evaluate the candidate's composition portfolio for acceptance and to provide the candidate with an opportunity to defend it. The Committee normally consists of at least three Internal Examiners (the candidate's own Supervisor, the Graduate Division Head or his/her nominee, and a third Internal Examiner from within or outside the Graduate Division) and an External Examiner.
- (b) The External Examiner will read the music score and/or consider any other materials, such as sound recordings, computerized data or media components, relevant to the composition, and present a written report thereon to the Graduate School for transmission to the appropriate Assessment Committee. The report will take into account, where appropriate, the following: use of compositional materials and techniques, organisation of events within a span of time, presentation, use of performance media, originality and aesthetic result or potential. The report will state whether the composition portfolio meets the standard for the award of the degree sought.
- (c) If the External Examiner is a local resident or happens to be in Hong Kong at the examination time, he/she may be requested to attend the performance of one or more compositions and in the oral examination on the candidate's portfolio conducted by the Assessment Committee.
- (d) Where it is impracticable for the External Examiner to be present at the oral examination, an additional External Examiner who can attend will be appointed. The additional External Examiner will have the same responsibilities as the first External Examiner.
- (e) After assessing the composition portfolio and attending the oral examination (if applicable), the External Examiner will give comments and a grade by completing the Assessment Report Form (in duplicate).
- (f) The report may be returned by fax or email, to the Graduate School for transmission to the Head of the Graduate Division concerned. As for the composition portfolio, the External Examiner may return only those pages for which there are comments or suggestions for amendments.

2.2. ***Master's Degrees***

2.2.1. External Examiners for Assessing Theses Leading to a Master of Philosophy (M.Phil.) *(becomes optional with effect from the 2020-21 academic year)*

- (a) Normally each External Examiner will assess not more than six theses for each academic year.
- (b) The External Examiner is appointed to the appropriate Thesis Assessment Committee set up for each candidate by the Graduate Council on the recommendation of the Graduate Panel concerned to evaluate the candidate's thesis for acceptance and to provide the candidate with an opportunity to defend the thesis. The Committee normally consists of at least three Internal Examiners (the candidate's own Supervisor, the Head of Graduate Division or his/her nominee, and a third Internal Examiner from within or outside the Graduate Division) and an External Examiner.
- (c) The External Examiner will read the thesis and present a written report thereon to the Graduate School for transmission to the appropriate Thesis Assessment Committee. The report will take account of the following aspects of the thesis: the problem or topic of study, research design or methodology, presentation, originality of thought and judgment, and quality as a contribution to knowledge, where appropriate. The report will state whether the thesis meets the standard for the award of the degree sought.
- (d) If the External Examiner is a local resident or happens to be in Hong Kong at the examination time, he/she may be requested to participate in the oral examination on the candidate's thesis conducted by the Thesis Assessment Committee.
- (e) After assessing the thesis, the External Examiner will send the completed Assessment Report Form (in duplicate), with comments and a grade, to the Graduate School for transmission to the Head of the Graduate Division concerned. The report may be returned by fax or e-mail.
- (f) As for the thesis, the External Examiner may return only those pages for which there are comments or suggestions for amendments.

2.2.2. External Examiners for Assessing Theses and Creative Projects Leading to a Master of Fine Arts (M.F.A.) *(becomes optional with effect from the 2020-21 academic year)*

- (a) The External Examiner is appointed to the appropriate Thesis Assessment Committee set up for each candidate by the Graduate Council on the recommendation of the Graduate Panel concerned to evaluate the candidate's written thesis and creative project for acceptance and to provide the candidate with an opportunity to defend them. The Committee normally consists of at least three Internal Examiners (the candidate's own Supervisor, the Graduate Division Head or his/her nominee, and a third Internal Examiner from within or outside the Graduate Division) and an External Examiner.
- (b) The External Examiner will read the written thesis and portfolio of creative works, which will include slides of the candidate's creative works and other materials relevant to the M.F.A. show, and present a written report thereon to the Graduate School for transmission to the appropriate Thesis Assessment Committee. The report will take into account, where appropriate, the following: originality, ability to use medium, clarity of presentation, consistency of forms and concepts, significance and methodology of research, accuracy and quality of results, etc. The report will state whether the thesis and creative project meet the standard for the award of the degree sought.
- (c) If the External Examiner is a local resident or happens to be in Hong Kong at the

examination time, he/she may be requested to participate in the oral examination on the candidate's thesis and creative project conducted by the Assessment Committee.

- (d) After assessing the thesis and creative project, the External Examiner will send the completed Assessment Report Form (in duplicate), with comments and a grade, to the Graduate School for transmission to the Head of the Graduate Division concerned. The report may be returned by fax or e-mail.
- (e) As for the thesis and creative project, the External Examiner may return only those pages for which there are comments or suggestions for amendments.

2.2.3. External Examiners for Assessing Composition Portfolios Leading to a Master of Music (M.Mus.) *(becomes optional with effect from the 2020-21 academic year)*

- (a) The External Examiner is appointed to the appropriate Assessment Committee set up for each candidate by the Graduate Council on the recommendation of the Graduate Panel concerned to evaluate the candidate's composition portfolio for acceptance and to provide the candidate with an opportunity to defend it. The Committee normally consists of at least three Internal Examiners (the candidate's own Supervisor, the Graduate Division Head or his/her nominee, and a third Internal Examiner from within or without the Graduate Division) and an External Examiner.
- (b) The External Examiner will read the music score and/or consider any other materials, such as sound recordings, computerized data or media components, relevant to the composition, and present a written report thereon to the Graduate School for transmission to the appropriate Assessment Committee. The report will take into account, where appropriate, the following: use of compositional materials and techniques, organisation of events within a span of time, presentation, use of performance media, originality and aesthetic result or potential. The report will state whether the composition portfolio meets the standard for the award of the degree sought.
- (c) If the External Examiner is a local resident or happens to be in Hong Kong at the examination time, he/she may be requested to participate in the oral examination on the candidate's composition portfolio conducted by the Assessment Committee.
- (d) After assessing the composition portfolio, the External Examiner will send the completed Assessment Report Form (in duplicate), with comments and a grade, to the Graduate School for transmission to the Head of the Graduate Division concerned. The report may be returned by fax or e-mail.
- (e) As for the composition portfolio, the External Examiner may return only those pages for which there are comments or suggestions for amendments.

2.2.4. Additional External Examiner for Master's Students

Graduate Division may exceptionally and upon justification appoint one additional External Examiner for assessing Master's students' theses/creative projects/composition portfolios, if necessary.

The duties of the additional External Examiner will be the same as outlined above, as appropriate.

3. Honorarium

- 3.1. Each External Examiner will be paid an honorarium of HK\$2,400 per thesis leading to the award of the degree of D.Mus., Ed.D. or Ph.D.
- 3.2. Each External Examiner will be paid an honorarium of HK\$2,000 per thesis leading to the award of the degree of M.Phil.
- 3.3. Each External Examiner will be paid an honorarium of HK\$2,000 per student for assessing a thesis and creative project leading to the award of the degree of M.F.A.
- 3.4. Each External Examiner will be paid an honorarium of HK\$2,000 per student for assessing a composition portfolio leading to the award of the degree of M.Mus.

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