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| Chairing Research Degree by Thesis Viva Voce Examinations | |
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| Classification: | Code of Practice |
| Version Number: | 1-07 |
| Status: | Approved |
| Approved by: | Research Degrees Committee |
| Approval Date: | 01/11/2019 |
| Effective from: | 01/11/2019 |
| Next Review Date: | - |
| Document Author: | Doctoral College |
| Document Owner: | Quality Support Service |
| Department/Contact: | Doctoral College |
| Collaborative provision: | Not Applicable |
| Related documents: | QAA UK Quality Code for Higher Education (2018) |
| Published location: | Quality and Standards website. [Quality and Standards | University of Hull](https://www.hull.ac.uk/choose-hull/university-and-region/key-documents/quality) |
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# Introduction

* 1. Taking into account external expectations (especially the QAA UK Quality Code (2018)) and practice at other institutions, the University has resolved that all viva voce examinations for research degrees by thesis must be chaired by a member of University of Hull academic staff independent of the student presenting the thesis and the examiners. This code governs the appointment and duties of chairs.
  2. The presence of an independent chair is designed to ensure that the viva voce examination is conducted in a fair and ordered manner. It is a protection mechanism for both student and examiners in the event of subsequent allegations of misconduct or bias on behalf of the examiners

## Scope

* 1. This code applies to all degrees classified by the Education Planning Committee (in consultation with the Research Degrees Committee) as research by thesis at both masters and doctoral level, and including the MD.

# Authority

* 1. The Research Degrees Committee (RDC) is the final arbiter of the interpretation and application of this code of practice.

# Appointment of Chairs

* 1. Chairs will be appointed by RDC on the recommendation of Heads of the examining Academic Unit. Chairs should normally hold a doctoral degree.
  2. In considering such nominations RDC should have regard to achieving a community of experienced viva Chairs which reflects the diversity of the University’s staff and student body.
  3. RDC is responsible for ensuring that staff appointed as chairs receive all necessary information regarding the proper conduct

## Appointment for individual *viva voce* examinations

* 1. In determining whom to appoint to each examination, RDC must ensure that:

1. The chair has not had direct involvement with the student’s thesis,
2. The chair is not one of the examiners of the thesis.
   1. The chair is not required to have any knowledge of the subject of the thesis, nor are they required to read the thesis.

# Duties of the Chair

* 1. The chair is responsible for the following:

1. Chairing the preliminary meeting of the examiners, including agreeing a structure and format for the viva, including the roles of the examiners (taking into account University expectations),
2. Introducing all those present at the viva voce examination, including attempting to put all parties at their ease,
3. Ensuring that all those present understand the procedures to be followed,
4. Outlining the structure and format of the viva voce to all those present,
5. Intervening in the examining process only if there appears to be bias, misconduct, unfairness or if the examiners are diverting from the agreed format of the viva in such a manner as to disadvantage the student, or if the chair believes the viva is progressing in a manner which could compromise the University’s academic standards. Actions which might be taken include calling a temporary halt to the meeting, holding a private discussion with the examiners or the candidate, or, most exceptionally, ending the examination,
6. Chairing the post-viva discussion of the examiners and assisting them in the formulation of a recommendation,
7. Ensuring that the examiners complete and sign the relevant forms at the end of the viva,
8. Ensuring that the recommendation of the examiners is conveyed to the student in a professional manner on the day of the viva; that the student is clear as to what may be required of them; and that the student understands that they will receive a formal letter from the Doctoral College detailing the recommendation of the examiners,
9. Providing information for any subsequent appeal procedure.

**Version Control**

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| **Version** | **Author** | **Date approved** | **Relevant sections** |
| 1 07 | Lisa Tees | NA | Migrated to new template |
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