UNIVERSITY OF
STIRLING

External Examiners' Handbook

Taught Programmes and Research Degrees

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Contents

Foreword

This handbook is divided up into two sections as follows:

Section 1: University Policy on External Examining for Taught Programmes
Section 2: University Policy on External Examining for Research Programmes

It aims to provide useful information for those involved in examining taught degrees at the University of Stirling. It is informed by the University's Policy on External Examining and by the UK Quality Code for Higher Education, chapter B7: External Examining. .

Web links to regulations, relevant policies and rules governing the presentation of theses are provided for ease of reference.

The University of Stirling wishes to express its gratitude for the valued contribution of its external and internal examiners to the quality assurance process.

Introduction

Our Vision

To be acknowledged worldwide as a distinguished University that addresses the social and environmental needs of society through innovative, interdisciplinary research and education.

Our mission:

To be a University of distinction that is ambitious, accessible and self-reliant, and whose purpose is to develop these qualities in our students, staff and the communities we serve.

Our priorities are to:

- Enhance the student experience by putting students first
- Improve research performance and postgraduate enrolment
- Be a vibrant intellectual community for scholars and the region
- Connect locally and globally to students, alumni, academia and business
- Be aware of society's needs and respond to them.

Structure and Organisation

The University of Stirling holds a unique place amongst Scottish HEIs as the only institution established in Scotland following the Robbins Report of 1963. It opened in 1967 on a 350 acre campus two miles north of Stirling in the late eighteenth-century landscaped park of the former Airthrey Estate. It was incorporated by Royal Charter *for the advancement and diffusion of learning and knowledge.*

The University was established with three strongly distinctive and innovative features:

- A two semester academic year
- A modular degree scheme
- Flexible study pathways

A major strength of the Stirling modular degree structure is its flexibility which the University regards as a significant benefit to student recruitment, progression and retention. At undergraduate level students are admitted to the University rather than to a school, providing a range of opportunities to students once registered and facilitating inter-disciplinary study. Approximately half of the undergraduate population graduates in a different degree programme from the one anticipated on entry. These arrangements allow students to experiment intellectually and change their study modes and pathways without loss of time. The University is arranged academically into seven schools.

Semester System

The University's academic session is divided into two semesters each of fifteen weeks. The Autumn Semester runs from September to December and the Spring Semester from January to late May. There is a reading/study block and an exam period at the end of each semester in December and May. (Repeat/deferred diets take place in late February and June.) The Stirling undergraduate degree structure is modular, comprising a series of recognised pathways based on progression and the use of prerequisites. The basic form of undergraduate study is the semester module, although a few final year honours modules cover the whole session. Modules are classified within the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework: in general, undergraduate modules in semesters 1-3 are level 8, whilst those in

semesters 4-8 are levels 9 or 10. Postgraduate modules are level 11.   The degree regulations for individual general and honours degrees state the modules required for a degree in a given subject.

SECTION 1:

UNIVERSITY POLICY ON EXTERNAL EXAMINING FOR TAUGHT PROGRAMMES

Contents:

SECTION 1

UNIVERSITY POLICY ON EXTERNAL EXAMINING FOR TAUGHT PROGRAMMES

1.   External Examining System

The University is the supreme degree awarding authority for all degrees awarded in its name. It is supported in this process by external examiners who play a key role in assisting the University to maintain the academic standards of degrees and other awards and to assure the quality of our undergraduate and postgraduate programmes.   The University of Stirling has a wide range of undergraduate, postgraduate taught and research programmes.   No degree of the University is awarded without participation in the examining process of at least one examiner external to the University.

The University's arrangements for external examiners were reviewed in 2011/12 following publication of -Chapter B7, External Examining of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education. They can be found within the University's assessment policy on the website:
http://www.stir.ac.uk/academicpolicy/handbook/assessmentincludingacademicmisco nduct/

2.   Periodic Testing

The University's system of assessment has three aims. The first is to be as just and as accurate as possible in ascertaining whether a student has the ability to pursue a rigorous course of study and to reach the level of attainment expected of the holder of a university degree. The second is to reduce student non-completion by giving adequate early warning of failure and to avoid undue strain arising from single highly-concentrated examinations. The third is to discover the intellectual ability of a student, not merely how good the student is at sitting and passing examinations. Examinations are not necessarily confined to the conventional type; other methods such as oral examinations, objective tests, practicals and prescribed tasks are used.

3.   Role and Remit of External Examiners

The role of external examiners is to ensure that the standards of awards from the University of Stirling are comparable with similar programmes or subjects in other UK higher education institutions, are appropriate in relation to the SCQF and national subject benchmark statements, and that the processes for assessment, examination, and awards are sound and fair. They are also asked to comment on the standard of student attainment in comparison to students elsewhere and on curricula and other pedagogical matters, see section 6.4.3 of the University's assessment policy.

4.   Appointment and Preparation of Examiners

The rules governing the appointment and preparation of external examiners are set out in 6.4.2 of the University's assessment policy.

5.   Issue of Documentation

5.1   The University should provide adequate documentation to enable the external examiner to have a proper understanding of the role and what is expected (6.4.2.8 of the University's assessment policy).

5.2   Schools are responsible for providing external examiners with supporting documentation on the programmes/subject area to be reviewed, as outlined in 6.4.2.9 of the University's assessment policy.

6.   Role of External Examiners

Section 6.4.3 of the University's assessment policy sets out the role of external examiners in the assessment process.

7.   Moderation and Assessment

7.1   Assessment and Examinations

It is the University's policy that formally assessed work should be systematically moderated or double-marked, whichever is appropriate, and that anonymous marking is operated for all examinations and coursework. These procedures are designed to standardise marking and remove any unintended bias from the process. Full details are set down in 6.2.4 of University's assessment policy.

7.2   Undergraduate Examinations

7.2.1   The Stirling undergraduate degree programme is modular in form, comprising a series of recognised pathways, based on progression and the use of prerequisites. The academic structure thus has considerable flexibility, characterised by interdisciplinary study, and incorporating a wide range of 4 year honours and 3 year bachelor and general degrees.

7.2.2   The University operates a system of periodic assessment for all semester modules leading to undergraduate degrees and it is also a feature of most postgraduate taught programmes. Assessment of work carried out during a semester is normally based on a selection of essays, short tests, projects, practicals or other assignments, to match the aims and objectives of each course and appropriate to the pedagogic methods used, together with end of semester examinations. The nature of the degree programme at Stirling requires semester modules to be fully assessed within the semester in which they are taught. Since the University operates a grade-accumulation system for the award of undergraduate degrees, incorporating periodic assessment, examinations do not figure as prominently in assessment as in many other universities. Semester grades are usually awarded on the basis of periodically assessed course work and a final examination in fixed proportions at the end of the semester.

7.2.3   The assessment forms and weightings are clearly stated in the University Calendar and in course handouts. The role of assessment in progression through a degree programme is described in the University Calendar and in school/divisional student handbooks. Assessed work produced in the course of the semester will normally be graded by those recognised teachers who are directly involved in the teaching of particular modules, in accordance with the school's assessment scheme. However, external examiners may choose to scrutinise this work. Where a particular module (at level 9 or above) has no final examination, samples of course work will be moderated by the external examiner.

7.2.4   Undergraduate examinations are held at the end of each semester, in December and May. Depending on the dates set by the University for the examinations themselves, and for the submission of final grades, external examiners can normally expect to have not less than seven clear days to review exam scripts. The University's assessment policy lays down the parameters for undergraduate reassessment opportunities. (See section 6.2.9.)

7.3   Postgraduate Examinations (Taught Course)

The University of Stirling offers a range of postgraduate taught programmes, delivered in a variety of study modes, leading to a range of programmes at Masters, PG Diploma and PG Certificate. Examinations for postgraduate taught courses are held at the end of each semester, in December and May.

8.   Endorsement of Assessment

At least one external should be appointed for all educational programmes and part of a programme that contributes to an award.

The University should:

(a)   be aware of and indicate to an external how the judgements of the external are expected to relate to agreed reference standards;

(b)   be aware of the relationship between the numbers of externals and the quantity of assessed material being examined;

(c)   indicate what level of work externals are involved in scrutinising;

(d)   consider the number of externals required for academically diverse programmes;

(e)   consider how externals will be deployed to assess the overall standards and coherence of combined studies and multi-disciplinary programme.

9.   Procedures for determining Honours Degree Classifications

The University operates an institution-wide grade point average (GPA) approach for determining honours degree classifications. This applies to all Honours degree programmes, unless the Academic Council has approved a variation for any specific degree programmes. (Section 6.6 of the University's assessment policy)

10.   Boards of Examiners

10.1   The role of boards of examiners is to determine recommendations for degrees to be awarded to students of the University. Recommendations should take into account all relevant academic information and, where appropriate, extenuating circumstances which might have affected the academic performance of students.

10.2   Membership of boards of examiners is outlined in 6.3.4 of the University's assessment policy.

10.3   The composition of boards of examiners is determined by heads of school at the beginning of the academic year and reported to Academic Registry and Governance Services (6.3.4.2 of the University's assessment policy).

The rules for the operation of boards of examiners are outlined in sections 6.3.4 and 6.3.5 of the University's assessment policy.

11.   Annual Report

11.1.   External examiners are required to submit a report annually following completion of the examining process. This can be done electronically, via the University's template (form ARO 006):
http://www.stir.ac.uk/academicpolicy/handbook/forms/
See section 6.4.4.2 of the University's assessment policy. All schools are required to respond formally to external examiners' reports (section 6.4.4.3),

11.2   In addition to the process outlined above, programme directors consider any matters raised by external examiners as part of the annual programme review process. External examiners' reports, and school consideration and responses to these reports, are also considered as part of the quinquennial programme of learning and teaching review.

11.3   The University annual report form consists of four sections.

11.4   Section one of the report asks for areas of good practice for commendation and areas for enhancement.

Section two relates to academic standards, assessment processes, performance standards and recommendations for awards.

Section three provides an opportunity for further comments including but not limited to issues raised in previous reports, arrangements for professional practice, and a final year overview.

Section four relates to adequacy of information provided to external examiners.

The report is designed to prompt external examiners to comment on all aspects of the external examining system, including organisation, provision of briefing documentation, marking, systems of moderation, academic standards and the conduct of boards of examiners. The report therefore provides the University with key evidence to enable it to achieve its aims in maintaining standards of academic attainment, comparable with those in other universities in the United Kingdom; verifying that standards are appropriate for its awards; ensuring that the assessment system is fairly operated in the marking, grading and classification of student performance.

Academic Registry and Governance Services sets the deadline for submission of reports. Fees are paid following receipt of the report.

12.   Collaborative Provision

Please see section 6.4.7 of the University's assessment policy for arrangements for collaborative provision.

13.   Payment Structure

13.1   <u>Expenses</u>

External examiners are entitled to reclaim reasonable expenses in relation to their duties. This includes meals and hotel accommodation while in attendance at the

University and the cost of travel to and from the University. Expenses claim forms should be returned to the Academic Registry and Governance Services for processing as soon as possible after the expenditure has occurred.

14.   Conclusion

External examiners should feel free to comment on any aspect of the examining process, programme content or academic standards. External examiners' reports are a key element in the quality assurance and maintenance of academic standards of the University's taught programmes

15.   Links to Supporting Documentation – Taught Programmes

➢ University assessment policy
   http://www.stir.ac.uk/academicpolicy/handbook/assessmentincludingacademicmisconduct/#q-4
➢ Extract from ordinance 58, Degrees, Diplomas and Certificates
➢ http://www.stir.ac.uk/media/services/calendar/ordinances/58%20Degrees%20diplomas%20and%20certificates.pdf

➢ First Degree Regulations
➢ http://www.stir.ac.uk/regulations/undergrad/

➢ General Regulations for Higher Degrees, Postgraduate Diplomas and Postgraduate Certificates, by Coursework
➢ http://www.stir.ac.uk/regulations/postgraduate/

➢ External Examiners Annual Report Form (ARO 006)
➢ http://www.stir.ac.uk/academicpolicy/handbook/forms/

➢ External Examiners Expenses Claim Form (ARO 010)
➢ http://www.stir.ac.uk/academicpolicy/handbook/forms/

SECTION 2:

UNIVERSITY POLICY ON EXTERNAL EXAMINING FOR RESEARCH DEGREES

Contents:

SECTION 2

UNIVERSITY POLICY ON EXTERNAL EXAMINING FOR RESEARCH PROGRAMMES

1.   Research Degrees and their Regulations

1.1   The University offers the following higher degrees by research:

        Doctor of Philosophy*
        Master of Philosophy*
        Doctor of Letters**
        Doctor of Science**

    *   governed by the Regulations for Higher Degrees by Research
   ** governed by the Regulations for Degrees of Doctor of Letters and Doctor of Science.

1.2   The University offers the following professional higher degrees by research:

        Doctor of Education
        Doctor of Nursing
        Doctor of Midwifery
        Doctor of Applied Social Research
        Doctor of Business Administration
        Doctor of Professional Health Studies
        Doctor of Diplomacy
        Master of Nursing
        Master of Midwifery

        These degrees are all governed by the Regulations for Professional Higher Degrees by Research.

1.3   As these programmes are examined via thesis, an external examiner is appointed for every individual student.

1.4   Whilst candidates for the Doctor of Philosophy are examined by thesis the University also has arrangements in place to award PhD by publication or practice http://www.stir.ac.uk/media/services/calendar/rules/rules-and-regulations-for-higher-degrees-by-research.pdf

2.   The Examining Procedure for Research Degrees at Stirling

2.1   <u>Notification of Thesis Title</u>

The student notifies Academic Registry and Governance Services of the thesis title (on form ARO 014 http://www.stir.ac.uk/academicpolicy/handbook/forms/) at least two months prior to submission of the thesis. The principal supervisor is responsible for ensuring the student is made aware of this requirement. Academic Registry and Governance Services sends the student confirmation of the receipt of the thesis title.

2.2   <u>Appointment of Examining Committee</u>

    2.2.1   Academic Registry and Governance Services sends the examining committee nomination form to the Principal Supervisor (ARO 018).

http://www.stir.ac.uk/academicpolicy/handbook/forms/

2.2.2 The Examining Committee is approved by the Head of School[1] [2] and Academic Registry and Governance Services ensures that all appointments meet the criteria.

2.2.3 Academic Registry and Governance Services confirms their appointments to the members of the examining committee and receives the acceptance from the external examiner, all via email.

2.3 Submission of Thesis

2.3.2 The student submits one copy of the thesis for each examiner to Academic Registry and Governance Services (ARO 015a http://www.stir.ac.uk/academicpolicy/handbook/forms/).

2.3.3 Academic Registry and Governance Services sends the thesis to the examiners with the appropriate examiners' report form.

2.4 The Oral Examination (*viva voce*)

2.4.1 The internal examiner is responsible for making all necessary arrangements for oral examinations and for ensuring that the external examiner is consulted regarding these arrangements.

2.4.2 Within two weeks of the viva, the examiners' report is sent to the Education and Student Experience Committee's Academic Panel.

2.5 Recommendations

2.5.1 The degree is granted
Academic Registry and Governance Services writes to the student to confirm the outcome of the examination and to advise on the submission of the electronic thesis and the hardbound copy. Copies of the 'Report of Examining Committee', including the pre-oral and post-oral reports, are enclosed. The student submits (from their University email address for security reasons) an electronic copy to the University Digital Repository followed by submission of one hardbound and one soft bound copy to Academic Registry and Governance Services and form ARO 015c http://www.stir.ac.uk/academicpolicy/handbook/forms/).

2.5.2 Recommendation - The degree is granted subject to minor changes

2.5.2.1 Academic Registry and Governance Services writes to the student to confirm the outcome of the examination, enclosing copies of the examiners' report and a list of changes to be made. A minor changes form (ARO 015d http://www.stir.ac.uk/academicpolicy/handbook/forms/) is sent to the specified examiner, who completes and submits it to Academic Registry and Governance Services once the changes have been made. Academic Registry and Governance Services writes to the

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[1] Caveat to form ARO 018 states that there should be no compromise to the quality process and, if appropriate, Head of Student Administration/Head of Graduate School scrutiny will be sought.
[2] In the event that the Head of School is a member of the examining committee, approval of the committee should be deferred to the School's Director of Research.

student to confirm the outcome of the examination and to confirm which examiner the changes have to be forwarded to.

2.5.2.2   The student submits (from their University email address for security reasons) an electronic copy to the University Digital Repository followed by submission of one hardbound and one soft bound copy to Academic Registry and Governance Services and form   ARO   015c http://www.stir.ac.uk/academicpolicy/handbook/forms/).

2.5.3   <u>Recommendation - Resubmission is required</u>

2.5.3.1   Academic Registry and Governance Services writes to the student to confirm the outcome of the examination, enclosing copies of the examiners' report and written guidance and an indication of the major deficiencies which require rectification in the resubmission.

2.5.3.2   The student submits one copy of the revised thesis for each examiner (form ARO 015b) http://www.stir.ac.uk/academicpolicy/handbook/forms/

2.5.3.3   Academic Registry and Governance Services sends the thesis to the examiners with the appropriate examiners' report form.

2.5.3.4   The viva is arranged by the internal examiner. Within two weeks of the viva, the examiners' report is sent to Academic Registry and Governance Services together with a list of any minor changes to be made. The examiners' recommendations are referred to the Education and Student Experience Committee's Academic Panel.

2.5.3.5   Academic Registry and Governance Services writes to the student as above.

2.5.3.6   The student submits (from their University email address for security reasons) an electronic copy to the University Digital Repository followed by submission of one hardbound and one soft bound copy to Academic Registry and Governance Services.

2.5.3.7   Only one resubmission is permitted.

2.5.4   <u>Recommendation – grant lower award (MPhil)</u>

See 5.5.1

2.5.5   <u>Recommendation – resubmission for a lower award (MPhil)</u>

See 5.5.3

2.5.6   <u>Recommendation – no award</u>

2.5.6.1   Academic Registry and Governance Services writes to the student to confirm the outcome of the examination, enclosing copies of the examiners' report.

3.   Composition of the Examining Committee

3.1 The committee must comprise at least one internal examiner and at least one external examiner, who will act as chair. Where the candidate is or has been a member of the academic staff of the University there should be at least two external examiners, one of whom should chair the committee.

3.2 No external examiner shall have been a supervisor of the candidate. Internal examiners must be members of the academic staff. The examining committee must include at least one internal examiner who is neither a probationary member of staff, nor an honorary member of staff, nor a recognised teacher of the University who is not a member of the University. The principal supervisor should normally not be appointed as an examiner; where this is permitted an additional internal examiner must be appointed.

3.3 Examining committees are expected to complete the examination of the candidate and submit their report as soon as reasonably possible, normally within three months of receipt of the thesis. If this proves to be impossible, examiners are asked to notify Academic Registry and Governance Services of the reasons for the delay. The University is concerned to avoid candidates facing lengthy delays during the examination process.

4.   The Oral Examination (*viva voce*)

4.1 An oral examination is required for all doctoral candidates. It should normally be held at the University, but at the discretion of the examiners it may be held elsewhere. All members of the examining committee must be present at the oral examination.

4.2 It is the responsibility of the internal examiner to make arrangements for the oral examination, including an opportunity for the examiners to confer before the viva.

4.3 The principal supervisor is not normally appointed as a member of the examining committee but may attend the oral examination as an observer with the agreement of the chair of the examining committee, and in consultation with the student.

4.4 The thesis should be treated with the same confidentiality as any other research which has been submitted but not yet published. Material from the thesis should not be cited or quoted before the examination process has been concluded and the degree awarded.   The thesis should not be shown to third parties who are not members of the examining committee.

4.5 Each examiner is asked to complete a pre-oral report before the oral examination is held. Examiners are asked to note that the student will eventually receive a copy of these documents.

4.6 The purpose of the oral examination is:

  o to enable the examiners to assure themselves that the thesis is the candidate's own work;
  o to give the candidate the opportunity to defend the thesis and to clarify any obscurities in it;
  o to enable the examiners to assess the candidate's general knowledge in the particular field of learning.

4.7 Care should be taken to ensure that candidates are encouraged to feel at ease so that they can display their knowledge and abilities to best effect. The strengths as well as the weaknesses of the thesis should be acknowledged and explored. At an early stage in the proceedings, candidates should be given an opportunity to explain

precisely what their thesis is intended to achieve and how they see its significance as a contribution to knowledge. Candidates should be given the opportunity to explain any apparent failure to use important materials, whether primary or secondary, or neglect of relevant approaches or methodologies.

4.8   It is important that where a thesis reveals significant deficiencies which might lead to a report which is not unequivocally favourable, a representative sample of these should be drawn to the candidate's attention and time for explanation and defence allowed for within the oral examination.

4.9   It is possible for examiners to disagree to a greater or lesser extent in their evaluation of the work. It is, therefore, desirable that the examiners confer before the oral examination so that, should significant divergences of opinion be identified, a strategy may be devised which would resolve these differences by agreed means (which might include the careful structuring of the oral examination).

5.   Examiners' Reports

5.1   The examiners' report submitted to Academic Registry and Governance Services following the oral examination should make a recommendation in accordance with the possible outcomes contained in the examination section of the relevant regulations. The report should provide clear evidence that the required academic standards have been met, and that the examination has been a fair test of the candidate's ability.

5.2   Examiners should be aware that examiners' reports, including the pre-oral reports, are routinely copied to the candidates and their principal supervisor when the official notification of the outcome of the examination is conveyed to them.

6.   Examiners' Recommendations

6.1   Recommendation - the degree is granted

        This recommendation should be made if the candidate has met all the requirements for the degree and the thesis is free of typographical errors.

6.2   Recommendation - the degree is granted subject to minor changes

        6.2.1   A recommendation that the degree be awarded subject to minor changes should be made only if the Examiners are able to answer positively all of the key questions in the Examiners' report, and therefore only if the matters requiring correction do not bring into question that the research reported in the thesis fully merits the award of the degree. Minor changes are understood to include correction of typographical or editorial errors (e.g. the omission of references) and/or local revisions to the text of the thesis, including changes to the introduction chapter. Examiners should attach a list of changes to the Examiners' report when submitting it to Student Administration so that this can be sent to the candidate with the formal letter. The maximum period of study permitted for minor changes is three months. The minor changes period will commence from the date candidates are notified formally by Student Administration of the outcome of the oral examination.

        6.2.2   If minor changes are required to the thesis, it is the responsibility of the Internal Examiner to ensure that a written indication of what is expected is given to the candidate. The Examiner with responsibility for approving any

changes to the thesis will be emailed a form by Student Administration on which to confirm whether the necessary changes have been satisfactorily made.

6.3 <u>Recommendation - resubmission is required</u>

6.3.1 If substantial parts, e.g. a whole chapter, of the thesis are required to be rewritten, or if the revisions called for require significant further research, then resubmission should be recommended. To reflect this the maximum time allowed for resubmission is 18 months. The resubmission period will commence from the date candidates are notified formally by Student Administration of the outcome of the oral examination. If the Examiners recommend submission of a revised thesis for examination, Examiners should give the candidate written guidance and an indication of the major deficiencies which require rectification in the resubmission.

6.3.2 Resubmission will require the full examination process to be carried out, normally by the same examining committee. This process will include an oral examination, unless the examining committee indicates, after reading the revised thesis, that a second oral examination is not required. Where a second viva is waived, a pre-oral report from each Examiner, completed following the reading of the revised thesis, is still required.

6.3.3 Only one resubmission is permitted.

6.4

6.5 <u>Recommendation – resubmission for a lower award (MPhil)</u>

6.5.1 Where a thesis does not meet the requirements for PhD but the view of the examiners is that the thesis could be revised to meet the requirements for the award of MPhil, the examiners can recommend that the thesis be resubmitted for the lower award - see 6.3.

6.6 <u>Recommendation – no award</u>

Where the view of the examiners is that the thesis could not be revised to meet the requirements for an award, they can recommend that no degree be granted.

6.7 It is normal for the examiners to convey informally to the candidate at the end of the oral examination, or shortly afterwards, the nature of the recommendation that will be made in their report. The form and content of the examiners' reports should be sufficiently detailed to take into account the scope and significance of the thesis and to appreciate its strengths and weaknesses. The report should be sufficient to reconcile the final decision with the pre-oral examination judgements. The completed forms should be returned direct to Academic Registry and Governance Services.

6.8 The Examiners' recommendations are subject to scrutiny by the Education and Student Experience Committee's Academic Panel. If there are issues with the recommendation, any final decision will be taken by the Education and Student Experience Committee's Academic Panel.

7. External Examiners' Expenses

7.1   External examiners are entitled to reclaim reasonable expenses in relation to their duties. This includes meals and hotel accommodation while in attendance at the University and the cost of travel to and from the University. Expenses claim forms should be returned to Academic Registry and Governance Services for processing as soon as possible after the expenditure has occurred. The external examiner may return these either direct or via the school.

8.   Conclusion

External examiners should feel free to comment on any aspect of the examining process, programme content or academic standards. External examiners' reports are a key element in the quality assurance and maintenance of academic standards of the University's research programmes.

9.   Links to Supporting Documentation - Research Programmes

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- Regulations for Higher Degrees by Research
- http://www.stir.ac.uk/media/services/calendar/rules/rules-and-regulations-for-higher-degrees-by-research.pdf

- Regulations for Professional Higher Degrees by Research
- http://www.stir.ac.uk/media/services/calendar/rules/rules-and-regulations-for-professional-higher-degrees-by-research.pdf

- Regulations for Degrees of Doctor of Letters and Doctor of Science
- http://www.stir.ac.uk/media/services/calendar/rules/rules-and-regulations-doctor-of-letters-and-doctor-of-science.pdf

- Rules for the form and presentation of thesis for Higher Degrees
- http://www.stir.ac.uk/registry/studentinformation/researchpostgraduates/thesissubmissionandexamination/

- External Examiners' Expenses Claim Form ARO-010
- http://www.stir.ac.uk/academicpolicy/handbook/forms/

- Academic Appeals at Postgraduate Research Level
- http://www.stir.ac.uk/academicpolicy/handbook/student-academic-appeals-and-complaints/#q-2

- PhD by publication Guidelines
  http://www.stir.ac.uk/media/services/calendar/rules/rules-and-regulations-for-higher-degrees-by-research.pdf
- Practice-based PhD Guidelines
  http://www.stir.ac.uk/media/services/calendar/rules/rules-and-regulations-practice-based-PhD-arts-and-humanities.pdf