

Date last modified: December 2022

The chair of the oral examination is responsible for maintaining the integrity of the oral examination process and acts as a neutral chair at the examination.

The chair is a member of the University oral examiner,
nominated by the Department/School and appointed by the Dean of Postgraduate Research.

The involvement of a less experienced member of the academic staff as an observer through the examination process and oral examination, mentored by the chair, is encouraged prior to appointment as an exam chair.

The role of the Oral Examination Chair

Before the oral examination

reached over whether to proceed to an oral examination. The exam chair is welcome to share the decision with the candidate and the supervisor, and the Dean or other to facilitate this discussion.

reached 5 days prior to the oral examination date, the student should be informed of the delay. If consensus is to proceed to an oral examination, then the chair can proceed to finalize details for the oral examination as planned. If the decision is to invite the candidate to revise and resubmit the thesis prior to an oral examination, the Dean is to be advised. The planned oral examination will be postponed and the Dean will invite the candidate to revise and resubmit the thesis. The exam chair will inform the examiners of this outcome and invite them to act as examiners for the resubmitted thesis in due course.

- If both examiners recommend that the candidate revise and resubmit prior to an oral examination, the exam chair will be advised that the planned oral examination is to be postponed. The Dean will invite the candidate to revise and resubmit the thesis. UC Graduate School will inform the examiners of this outcome and invite them to act as examiners for the resubmitted thesis in due course.
- If one or more examiners recommend the candidate not be awarded a Doctorate (or invited to revise and resubmit the thesis for re-examination) the Dean will contact the exam chair and supervisors to discuss the outcome.

The exam chair can release the reports to the examiners at least 10 working days before the oral examination but should release the reports to the candidate and senior supervisor no more than 10 working days and no less than five calendar days before the oral examination.

- With the agreement of the Dean of Postgraduate Research, reports may be released more than 10 days or fewer than five days prior to the oral examination, if there is good reason for such (e.g., student and/or supervisor are overseas). The exam chair (or student or supervisor) should make a case to the Dean of Postgraduate Research under such circumstances.
- If they wish to do so, the exam chair may contact the examiners prior to the oral examination to clarify issues raised in the written reports. Unless otherwise indicated, the oral examiner will be responsible for determining the outcome of the oral examination but, if deemed necessary, the absent examiner can be consulted before or after the oral examination.

The exam chair should contact the candidate, supervisor and oral examiner to reconfirm details (time and place) of the oral examination.

- The exam chair may also wish to inform all participants of the planned structure of the oral examination. While there is no set format, the following are typical:
 - the candidate is initially invited to present a brief overview of the research reported in the thesis. This provides the candidate with an opportunity to relax and feel comfortable talking before the questions begin;
 - the oral examiner is invited to ask questions of the candidate;
 - either the oral examiner or the exam chair is asked to put the questions submitted by the absent examiner;
 - at the end of the questioning the candidate is invited to make any final comments.

Usually, only the senior or replacement supervisor will attend the oral examination. However, other supervisors can attend if the student is made aware of this.

At the oral examination

Welcome all those present and inform them as to the structure of the oral examination:

- remind any observers that they are not to participate in the examination or communicate in any way during the examination;
- remind the supervisor that they may participate in the examination to the extent invited by the exam chair and should not offer any answers to the questions posed to the candidate during the examination;
- inform those present that you will make notes throughout the examination, including recording the questions asked and the candidate's responses.

of either the exam chair or oral examiner the senior supervisor may be required to absent him/herself during the decision making.

If there is a less experienced academic observing the oral examination process, mentored by the exam chair, then they may remain present but not participate in these discussions.

- explain the possible outcomes at the end of the oral examination, which are in the form of a recommendation to the Dean:
 - that the Doctorate be awarded;
 - that the Doctorate be awarded after specified amendments are satisfactorily completed;
 - that the candidate be invited to revise and resubmit the thesis for re-examination (including a second oral examination);
 - that the candidate not be awarded the Doctorate.

The chair of the oral examination shall act as a neutral chair and should not act as an additional examiner and does not have voting rights, but may ask questions of the candidate. The chair shall:

- ensure that there is opportunity for all the questions to be addressed and that the examination is conducted in a cordial and collegial manner. This may involve moving the examination forward from a given discussion point;
- ensure that the questions posed by the absent examiner in their written report are put to the candidate;
- ensure that the questions posed by the oral examiner have been addressed to their satisfaction;
- make notes as to the performance of the candidate throughout the oral examination and record any outstanding issues to be addressed. These notes will assist with the completion of the Doctoral Oral Examination Recommendation Form;
- ensure that the candidate is given an opportunity to make any final comments;
- invite all except the oral examiner to leave the room, or go offline in the case of a video-link oral examination;
- discuss with the oral examiner the recommendation to be made to the Dean.

The exam chair can invite the senior supervisor to participate in the discussions if they deems it appropriate, but, in doing so, it must be kept in mind that the supervisor has observer status and is not an examiner.

If deemed necessary, the absent examiner can be consulted before a decision is made regarding the recommendation to the Dean. This is, however, an unusual situation.

If the recommendation is that the Doctorate be awarded subject to satisfactory completion of amendments, the required amendments are to be documented for inclusion in the Doctoral Oral Examination Recommendation Form.

- agreement should be reac 59.4W*nB/F31.04f1 0 0 1 473.9Tm0 g0 G[D]5(octo)10(r-(al)]Tt7ET6.2 8.

Following the oral examination

Complete and submit the Doctoral Oral Examination Recommendation Form to Graduate School (graduateschool@canterbury.ac.nz) as soon as possible after the oral examination. Raise any remaining issues with the Dean.

If you have any questions regarding the examination process or the exam chair contact your Department/School Postgraduate Coordinator or (graduateschool@canterbury.ac.nz).

Checklist