

Communications concerning appointment of DPhil examiners

1. *Invitation to examiners*

A potential examiner is invited by the Research Degrees Team, normally by email. It should be noted that the invitation is extended on behalf of the relevant Graduate Studies Committee or Board.

Examiners are informed of the names of the candidate's supervisor and the person who has been invited to act as the other examiner.

The email explains the arrangements for payment of the fee and reimbursement of expenses.

Examiners also receive an attached copy of the Memorandum of Guidance (GSO5). This document includes an excerpt from the Examination Regulations summarising 'the duties of examiners'. Examiners are warned that, after successful completion of the examination, their reports are made available to candidates in their entirety.

Potential examiners are expected to inform the university immediately if there is any connection to the candidate which might affect their ability to act as an impartial examiner.

Once the invitation has been accepted, the examiners are formally appointed.

When the thesis is despatched to the examiners, the examiners, supervisor(s) and candidate receive a confirmation of despatch by email at the same time. This will include the notification to both supervisor(s) and candidate of the names of the examiners.

2. *Email to supervisors*

The email informs supervisors of the names of the appointed examiners.

If there is any information about the candidate or his/her work, of which the supervisor(s) think(s) the examiners should be aware, it should be sent to the relevant Board via the Graduate Studies Assistant (see <http://www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/graduates/contacts/> for details). Such communications must be confined to matters of fact which are of direct relevance and assistance in connection with the examination of a candidate and which the examiners may legitimately take into account in conduct of the examination. Supervisors are expressly forbidden to communicate to the examiners any comments as to the merit of the thesis.

The email gives a list (not exhaustive) of examples of the type of information which might properly be communicated to the examiners via the relevant Board. This may be summarised, thus:

- difficulties experienced by the candidate in connection with source material;
- previous publication of any part of the thesis;
- considerations affecting performance in the viva (e.g. a candidate who has a speech impediment);
- candidate's availability for the viva;
- information concerning confidentiality of any part of the thesis.

The email explains that information about illness or personal circumstances which might be relevant to the examination must be communicated to the Proctors and not sent directly to the examiners.

3. *Email to candidates*

The email informs the candidate of the names of the examiners appointed and tells them that they should expect to receive notice of the date of examination direct from the examiners in due course, probably also by email. It reminds candidates of their responsibility for ensuring that both their email and postal addresses are up to date, and that their College, or any other address provided, will forward to them promptly any letters that may be sent.

A reminder is given that no communication with the examiners may take place, except to acknowledge the receipt of the notice of examination date and to confirm that it is convenient.

Candidates are asked to let the Research Degrees Team (researchdegrees@admin.ox.ac.uk) know if they do not hear from the examiners within a period of four weeks of the date of the email. If the thesis has been re-submitted, they should wait up to eight weeks, so that the examiners may decide whether a second viva is required.

The email explains arrangements for returning the examiners' copies of the thesis. |