**UCL Doctorate in Clinical Psychology**

**Guidelines for internal examiners of the research thesis**

*Updated: 25 June 2014*

In addition to examining the thesis, the internal examiner is also responsible for maintaining records of the examination process and for communicating with the candidate. The sequence of events is as follows:

*Pre-viva*

1. You will normally receive the theses that you will be examining in early July, about eight weeks before the viva date in early September. (Occasionally vivas take place at other times of year, where you may have less time, but only one thesis.)

2. In order to make your evaluation of the thesis, you may want to revisit the course documentation. The regulations specify that the thesis must be a piece of original research relevant to clinical psychology and be of publishable quality. Trainees’ guidelines for [conducting their major research project](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/dclinpsy/handbook-publication/section21) and for [writing up and presenting their thesis](https://www.ucl.ac.uk/dclinpsy/trainee-research/Research_documents/res_writingandpresenting) are on the course website, as are the [criteria for evaluating the thesis](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/dclinpsy/trainee-research/Research_documents/res_evaluatethesis).

3. After you have read each thesis, you need to write a brief internal examiner’s report, on the form supplied (Internal Examiner’s Preliminary Report). In addition to your official report, it is also often useful to list separately for yourself any points that you wish to raise in the viva, with the corresponding page numbers of the thesis.

*Viva*

4. The vivas are scheduled at hourly intervals, but the candidate is normally in the room for 30 or 40 minutes, in order to give the examiners time for discussion and paperwork. The external examiner normally takes the lead in the viva. Both examiners should confer before it starts, in order to see whether they broadly agree about the quality of the thesis, the important points to be raised and the general structure of the viva. It is good practice for the examiners to try to put the candidate at ease at the beginning of the viva, for example, by highlighting positive aspects of the thesis. At the end of the viva, feedback on the outcome of the examination should be given to the candidate. (This must not be given earlier on, as the outcome will partially depend on the candidate’s performance in the viva.) The candidate may be asked to leave the room if the examiners need to confer privately, but this is often not necessary. As the exam board makes the final decision, the suggested form of words to be used at the end of the viva is “We will be recommending to the exam board that ...”

*Post-viva*

5. After the viva, both examiners need to agree a joint examiners’ final report (on the form supplied – Examiners’ Summary Report for a Candidate for a Professional Doctorate), which will be sent to the candidate and to College. It must comment on both the quality of the thesis and the candidate’s performance during the viva, as well as including a list of required revisions. (Please state whether you require the candidate to submit the entire revised thesis or just the relevant pages.) It needs to give the recommended outcome, as described in the [criteria for evaluating the thesis](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/dclinpsy/trainee-research/Research_documents/res_evaluatethesis).

6. All three reports (the internal and external examiners’ preliminary reports, and the final joint report) must be typed and have the appropriate signatures (a perennial problem is forgetting to get the external examiners’ signatures before they leave the building). Original signed copies of all three reports need to be given to the Research Administrator.

7. Each candidate’s thesis and viva performance will be discussed at the Exam Board, which formally decides the outcome of each examination. You are responsible for recording the final decision, any required revisions, who will evaluate the revised thesis (yourself alone, and/or the external examiner) and whether another viva is required.

8. Early in the week following the Exam Board, the candidate will be given the joint examiners’ final report (which will include the list of required revisions, see point 4 above), so it is important that you give this to the Research Administrator as soon as possible after the Exam Board. Candidates will also receive a covering letter from the Joint Research Directors, giving the procedure for resubmission (for those of you who have examined before, this now replaces your letter to the candidate).

9. Retain one copy of the thesis yourself, so that you can check the revisions against the original. The second copy should be returned to the candidate or to the Research Administrator.

10. Candidates will be told that they may contact their internal examiner for points of clarification only. Note that you are the examiner, not the supervisor, so your role is to specify the changes needed, rather than providing detailed help in carrying them out.

*Re-submission*

11. The candidate will submit the revised thesis to the Research Administrator. You will usually check the revisions yourself, but it may be sent out to the external examiner, depending on the decision of the Exam Board. In the case of minor corrections, once you have approved the thesis let the candidate know (and offer your congratulations on completing the thesis!). This can be done by either email or letter, but a copy must be sent to the Research Administrator so that she has a record of who has passed. In the case of three-month or one-year revisions, you need to inform the Chair of the Exam Board of your approval of the revised thesis; Chair’s action can usually then be taken to formally approve it. At the next Exam Board, you will need to report the final outcome of theses with three-month or one-year revisions.