

8.3 Assessment boards and examiners

Procedures relating to assessment/examination boards for research degrees indicate:

- who comprises the assessment board (internal (if any) and external examiners; independent chair; and others) and the circumstances where additional members may be required (e.g. circumstances that require the appointment of a second external examiner or other additional examiners)

- the role and responsibilities of each of the board members in the context of all elements of the examination including circumstances where the opinions of external examiners are given particular weight in final assessment decisions and recommendations
- the arrangements and conditions for formal nomination and appointment of the board members including:
 - qualifications required (e.g. normally qualified to at least the equivalent NFQ level of the award sought by the research student); experience required, and defining what type of research activity (standard, degree of relevance and how recent) is required
 - those excluded from involvement in the assessment; defining what is considered to represent a conflict of interest, restrictions on repeat appointments or clusters of appointments from specific schools, departments, research units; what constitutes appropriate independence from the student, project and/or institution
 - the criterion for being considered 'external' or 'internal' (with external generally understood and accepted as independent and external to the provider)
 - what qualifications and experience are required for those members of the board that are not involved in the examination of the student (e.g. independent chair)
- where records of external examiners appointed for research degrees, for each broad academic/discipline area can be consulted, when new appointments are being considered
- how candidates are informed of possible examination board members in advance of their appointment and afforded an opportunity to raise concerns known to them regarding a proposed nominee
- a robust mechanism for ensuring appointments of examiners are in line with the stated conditions and requirements and reviewing the effectiveness of the procedures for appointments and outcomes required