香港科技大学(广州)
THE HONG KONG
UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND
TECHNOLOGY (GUANGZHOU)

Guidelines on PhD Thesis Examination Committees

A. Appointment

Upon the recommendations of the Thrust and the Hub, the Guangzhou office of the HKUST Fok Ying Tung Graduate School shall appoint a PhD Thesis Examination Committee (TEC) to examine the candidate who has expressed the intention of defending his/her thesis.

B. Composition

1. A PhD TEC shall consist of:
    1.1. A Chairperson from outside the student's major Thrust;
    1.2. The thesis supervisors;
    1.3. Two faculty members, in addition to the thesis supervisors, from the student's major Thrust;
    1.4. One faculty member, other than the thesis supervisors, from outside the student's Thrust; and
    1.5. One examiner external to the University who has expertise in the field being examined and holds the rank of Associate Professor or above. Any deviations from the requirements above such as an external examiner from the industry should be reviewed by the PG Committee and approved by the Thrust Head.
2. The **Chairperson** from outside the student's Thrust is selected by the Hub from a pool of faculty holding the rank of Associate Professor or above. He/she should have had experience in the conduct of PhD thesis examinations.
3. The **external examiner** should normally be professionally detached from the thesis supervisors, the student and the University.
    3.1. A person who has engaged in close research collaboration with the thesis supervisors or the student within five years prior to the thesis examination, including advisor/advisee relationship in research studies, and joint work in research projects or co-authored publications, should not serve as an external examiner.
    3.2. A person who has been on the teaching staff of HKUST(GZ), even in a visiting or adjunct faculty capacity, within the past three years, or who will join the University

service before the assessment is completed, is not eligible for appointment as an external examiner.

4. Other than the thesis supervisors, at least two other examiners (including the external examiner) must hold the rank of Associate Professor or above. If a thesis supervisor holds the rank of Professor, at least one other examiner must hold the rank of Professor and be present at the thesis examination, and one other examiner must hold the rank of Associate Professor or above.

5. If the composition of the proposed membership of a PhD TEC varies from the above requirements, approval of FYTGS must be sought in advance.

C. Duties

1. Voting. There are at least six voting examiners on a PhD TEC, five internal and one external to the University. The Chairperson presides over the examination, but is not one of the voting members.

2. Attendance

   2.1. The default attendance mode is in-person. Should the Chairperson or any internal TEC members be unable to attend in person under special circumstances and have to attend remotely, the thesis examination may be conducted in a hybrid mode. To ensure academic integrity and quality assurance, the candidate and at least two additional participants (either Chairperson or TEC member) should participate in person.

   2.2. The external examiner can attend the examination either in person or remotely via online platforms such as Zoom.

3. Chairperson

   3.1. The Chairperson is expected to have skimmed through the thesis to have a rough understanding of the structure and organization of the thesis.

   3.2. During the examination, the Chairperson shall ensure that:

      3.2.1. The examination is conducted in accordance with the regulations and requirements of the University, and in a fair and unprejudiced manner.

      3.2.2. The questions addressed to the candidate are fair and clearly expressed.

      3.2.3. The examiners are all given sufficient opportunity to ask questions and the candidate is given sufficient opportunity to respond to the questions.

      3.2.4. There is sufficient opportunity of questions from the floor addressed to the candidate.

3.2.5. The recommendations of individual examiners are carefully considered, such that an overall recommendation may be arrived at in a fair and unprejudiced manner.

3.2.6. The final recommendation of the TEC reflects the majority view of the examiners.

3.2.7. The final recommendation of the TEC conforms to the regulations of the University that govern thesis examinations.

3.3. Authority to cancel. The Chairperson may cancel a scheduled thesis examination if, on the day of the thesis examination,

3.3.1. There is no sign of the candidate 15 minutes after the scheduled time of commencement of the thesis examination; or

3.3.2. There is no show of an examiner 15 minutes after the scheduled time of commencement of the thesis examination.

3.4. Reports

3.4.1. Report on Thesis Examination Result. Toward the end of the thesis examination, the Chairperson is required to (i) collect Part 2 of the "Report on Thesis Examination Result for Research Postgraduate Degrees" from all the examiners, and (ii) complete Part 3 and Part 4.1 of the report, with the assistance of the examiners. The complete set of documents should be forwarded to the Thrust Head or the thesis supervisors as appropriate. For details, please refer to Section C of "*Guidelines on Conducting MPhil and PhD Thesis Examinations*".

3.4.2. Chairperson's Report on Thesis Examination. The Chairperson is also required to submit an online "Chairperson's Report on Thesis Examination" to FYTGS within one week from the date of the thesis examination, reporting any irregularities observed during the conduct of the thesis examination.

4. Examiners

4.1. Before and during the examination

4.1.1. Examiners must thoroughly read the thesis prior to the examination, and must critically assess the quality of the research, the originality of the thesis and its impact on the field of study. Examiners shall review the *iThenticate* report, consider whether the submitted thesis achieves an acceptable Similarity Index (SI) and recommend for amendments to the thesis as needed.

4.1.2. Examiners should prepare questions and discussion materials, to be asked of the candidate in the thesis examination.

4.1.3. As a result of the reading of the thesis and the performance of the candidate in the examination, the examiners must be satisfied that:

4.1.3.1. The candidate has clearly demonstrated the ability and skills to conduct a major intellectual study, and arrive independently at a successful conclusion.

4.1.3.2. The thesis represents the candidate's own significant and original contribution to the discipline that is publishable in major international journals.

4.1.3.3. The candidate, both verbally and in writing, is able to present the thesis clearly, systematically, and coherently.

4.1.3.4. The candidate has convincingly and lucidly defended the thesis.

4.1.4. To arrive at a final assessment of the quality of the thesis and the performance of the candidate, the examiners, in open consultation with the Chairperson, must jointly arrive at a recommendation which reflects the majority view. The examiners then adopt the majority decision.

4.2. Reports

4.2.1. Both internal and external examiners must each submit Part 2 of the "Report on Thesis Examination Result for Research Postgraduate Degrees" to the Chairperson at the end of the thesis examination.

4.2.2. The examiners should assist the Chairperson to prepare the "Report on Thesis Examination Result for Research Postgraduate Degrees" recommending the outcome of their assessment of the thesis examination.

5. External Examiner

5.1. The external examiner has all the duties and responsibilities of the other local examiner.