



Guidelines for the Appointment of External Examiners for UVic Doctoral Candidates

The UVic Graduate Calendar, approved by the Senate, governs all academic activities at the University of Victoria. In the section “Composition of Final Oral Examining Committees: Doctoral degrees” the examining committee is specified as follows:

“The supervisory committee plus a Chair and at least one other examiner from outside the University. Such external examiners are appointed by the Dean of Graduate Studies in consultation with the academic unit(s), and must be arm’s-length authorities in the field of research being examined.”

Evaluation of our students’ doctoral work by expert external examiners provides an essential service to our University by helping to ensure that our graduates are performing to an academic standard that is in line with national and international expectations. The reputations of our students, our faculty, and our university are impacted.

The qualifications of an external examiner are critical, as is their ability to provide an expert evaluation of the merits of a student’s work that is as free as possible of any bias, including the **appearance** of bias, which may be seen to predispose any particular outcome. Normally an external examiner of a doctoral student’s degree should hold a doctorate or equivalent relevant credential from a recognized institution and have significant research and graduate supervisory experience in a discipline that is closely related to the student’s area of research.

In the approval of the nomination of an external examiner, The Faculty of Graduate Studies will be guided by the conflict of interest guidelines published by the federal research funding organizations that include CFI, CIHR, NSERC, and SSHRC:

<http://www.science.gc.ca/90108244-5201-4CFF-A4DD-23F485EFA358/Agreement2.pdf>

Therefore, an external examiner will be declared to be in conflict of interest if, **in the past 6 years**, the proposed external examiner has:

- co-authored any publication, collaborated, or is in the process of joint publishing with the student, the supervisor, or any member of the supervisory committee;
- held research funding, or is in the process of applying for research funding with the student, the supervisor, or any member of the supervisory committee;

Further, an external examiner will be declared to be in conflict of interest if the proposed external examiner has:

- ever published, or intends to publish with the student in the foreseeable future
- had a business, commercial, or financial relationship (or expects to enter into such a relationship) with the student, the supervisor, or any member of the supervisory committee;
- ever been in a supervisor/student relationship with the supervisor, the student, or any member of the supervisory committee;
- had a personal or professional relationship or has a familial relationship with the student, the supervisor, or any member of the supervisory committee;
- ever been a student or employee at the University of Victoria.

This list may not be exhaustive. If there is any doubt about the potential for conflict of interest (or perceived conflict of interest) with a proposed external examiner, it is the responsibility of the supervisor to bring this to the attention of the Dean of Graduate Studies.