

**Graduate School**

**Guidance on the role of the Chair of Examiners for MPhil/PhD/PhD by Published Work/DProf examinations**

These notes are intended as guidance and you are advised also to refer to the University’s [Academic Regulations for Research Degrees](https://www.westminster.ac.uk/research/research-framework).

**Introduction**

The Chair of Examiners will normally be the candidate’s School Doctoral Co-ordinator, or a senior member of staff nominated by the Doctoral Co-ordinator.

**Aims**

The primary role of the Chair of Examiners is to ensure the viva voce examination process is conducted fairly and in accordance with the University of Westminster regulations and procedures.

**The Role**

The Chair of Examiners will be responsible for:

* formally notifying the candidate, supervisors and examiners of the date and time of the oral examination and entering this into the VRE
* ensuring that the correct procedures for the examination of the thesis are carried out
* ensuring that the examiners’ preliminary independent reports have been completed prior to the examination
* introducing the examination
* ensuring and attesting to (by signing a declaration) the proper and fair conduct of the candidate and the examination in accordance with the University’s regulations
* providing regulatory or procedural guidance, especially in the case of dispute between Examiners
* ensuring that the examiners’ joint report is completed via the VRE at the end of the examination and is submitted to the Graduate School Registry, together with the amendments report, within two weeks of the examination
* where required, facilitate any essential communication between the candidate and the examiners that may be necessary after the oral examination, e.g. clarification on a required correction

Where the candidate has disclosed a disability which is supported by a Reasonable Adjustment Form (RAF) the Chair of Examiners will be responsible for:

* ensuring that the requirements of the RAF are implemented

The Chair of Examiners will not:

* participate in the questioning of the candidate
* intervene in the proceedings, other than in exceptional and extreme circumstances
* participate in the deliberations or decision-making of the Examiners, apart from providing advice on regulatory or procedural matters

**At the viva**

* At the start of the examination, the Chair should introduce the examiners and candidate
* The Chair should also explain that they are independent of the examination process and is present to ensure that the examination process is rigorous and fair and conducted in accordance with the University’s research degree regulations
* During the examination and the discussion held afterwards, should it become necessary to intervene during the course of the examination, the Chair may feel it appropriate to call a temporary intermission in the examination in order to speak with the examiners in private
* When the examiners have finished their discussions with the candidate, the Chair should ensure that everyone, including the candidate, has had an opportunity to ask any questions
* The Chair should draw the proceedings to a close and explain the next steps in the procedure. Ordinarily, the Chair will ask the candidate to withdraw from the room while the examiners consider the outcome(s) of the examination and their recommendation.