



Title: The Role of the Independent Chair
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Section 4R: The Role of the Independent Chair

Eligibility for Independent Chairs

Independent chairs cannot be a member of the candidate's supervisory team or have been involved in the candidate's transfer viva. However, they will:

1. have previously examined at least one research degree candidate;
2. be fully conversant with the University policies for postgraduate research degrees;
3. at least have one successful postgraduate research degree completion; and
4. have experience of chairing meetings.

The Role and Responsibility of the Independent Chair

The role of the independent chair is to safeguard the candidate's interest during the examination. They do not read the candidate thesis. They have ultimate responsibility for the way the viva voce is conducted and completion of the associated paperwork, specifically (2R para. 25 refers):

1. The role of the chair is to ensure that the examination is conducted with due regard to fair play and in compliance with SSU's regulations for postgraduate research degrees (Academic Handbook 2Q and 2R).
2. The chair also acts as a source of experience and guidance to the examiners about the conduct of the examination and ensures that the reports are completed and, where appropriate, feedback is provided to the student.
3. The chair also monitors the completion of reports relating to minor or major revisions and liaises with the externals about the action to be taken in response to any resubmission required of the student.

Tasks include:

1. Confirm to Graduate Studies whether the oral examination can proceed after

reviewing the preliminary reports

2. Attend the meeting with the examiners prior to the oral examination where preliminary comments are discussed
3. Attend the oral examination, but not to be part of the examination team
4. Advise examiners on the University's assessment process
5. Communicate informally to the candidate the recommended result of the examination team, making it clear that the final decision rests with Nottingham Trent University Research Degrees Committee
6. Ensure that the documentation is duly completed, signed, and returned to Graduate Studies promptly (ideally straight after the viva and not later than within 24 hours)
7. Submit the Independent Chair's report form to confirm that the examination was conducted in a fair and proper manner, in line with the University regulations for postgraduate research degrees.