COLLEGE OF SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING

POSTGRADUATE STUDIES COMMITTEE

Procedure Note – external examiners for Research degrees (MSc by Research, MPhil and PhD)

Appointment

The appointment of external examiners is the ultimate responsibility of Colleges. Heads of Schools have the final responsibility of recommending External Examiners to the College for appointment. Normally, the Head of Postgraduate Studies in the School, and in the case of taught degrees the Degree Programme Director, or in the case of research degrees the Supervisor(s), will have the primary responsibility of identifying appropriate examiners and making recommendations. In the case of PhD degrees, the student should also be a party to the choice.

Scrutiny of external examiner nominations by the School and the College must have regard to the following

1. only persons of sufficient levels of academic and professional expertise in relation to the relevant subject area should be appointed
2. only persons of sufficient levels of academic and professional expertise to command authority should be appointed
3. only persons with sufficient time for proper performance of functions should be appointed
4. only persons without any direct interest or ties with the School, its staff, its research programmes or its students should be considered
5. prospective examiners must be asked to identify conflicts of interest, and where a conflict of interest can not be avoided, the school must provide an explanation as to why the appointment must be made and a plan to minimize the potential problem for approval to the College Postgraduate Studies Committee
6. that consistency of levels of academic and professional expertise for external examiners is maintained across the College
7. at least one external examiner should be appointed (plus one internal examiner) for the examination of a thesis. If the thesis is multidisciplinary then it is permissible to appoint two external examiners where this would ensure the rigour of the assessment process.
Procedures for appointment

The following action should be taken

The Heads of Schools have the authority to delegate the scrutiny of appointments to the Head of Graduate Schools

1. on receipt of ‘Intention to sit’ form the College Office will request the appointment of examiners from the Head of School

2. the Head of School should seek nominations ensuring that the above guidelines are followed.

3. it is important that the nominee is approached early and asked to act as examiner to ensure availability and understanding of role and required level of commitment

4. nominations from the supervisor must be accompanied by a short explanation of the reason for the nomination and a current CV of the nominee outlining expertise, experience and prior examining experience where appropriate

5. the Head of School (or their nominee) is required to scrutinize the nomination and sign off the nomination form. The Head of School should satisfy themselves that the nominee has the appropriate level of expertise to act as examiner

6. the nomination form and a copy of the CV should be lodged with the College Office within 20 working days of receipt of the request

7. on receipt of completed nomination form the College Office will circulate the CV to two members of the CPGSC for scrutiny. The committee members should satisfy themselves that the nominee is of sufficient academic standing to command authority and that the standard of person is consistent with the standard of external examiners across the College

8. once full approval has been received the College Office will dispatch the thesis for assessment

9. in order that standards are maintained, it is important that external and internal examiners fully understand the nature of their duties. This will require appropriate briefing. That such a briefing has occurred is the responsibility of the Head of Graduate School.