

HKU-IMPERIAL JOINT PhD Examination Arrangements

Home Institution for HKU students means HKU and for Imperial Students means Imperial.

Host Institution for HKU students means Imperial and for Imperial Students means HKU.

The student will be examined in accordance with the regulations of the Home institution (i.e. the institution at which the student commenced the joint degree).

Candidates will normally spend the last six months before submission of their thesis at the Home institution.

1 Nomination and Appointment of Examiners

1.1 The nomination of examiners should normally be made at least four months (for Imperial) and three months (for HKU) prior to the expected submission of a thesis for examination. This is to ensure that there is sufficient time for the examiner nomination process to be completed and agreed by both institutions before thesis submission. The process is as follows:

- a) HKU and Imperial supervisors should identify and agree on the examiners to be nominated and acquire approval for these from their respective Departments. Students should not, under any circumstances, communicate with any examiner on matters related to his/her thesis examination. Inappropriate communication by a student towards an examiner would make that student liable for disciplinary action.
- b) Once agreed by the supervisors' respective Departments, proposals for examiners are then approved in accordance with the usual procedure of the Home institution. Once approved by the Home institution they should be submitted to the Host institution for approval.

For Imperial, the examination entry and nomination of examiners procedure can be found here:

<http://www3.imperial.ac.uk/registry/exams/examentryforms>

For HKU, the thesis submission and nomination of examiners procedure can be found here:

<http://www.gradsch.hku.hk/gradsch/web/student/thesis/index.htm>

- c) There will be three examiners in total:
 - One examiner from HKU
 - One examiner from Imperial College
 - One examiner external to both institutions
- d) Although it is unlikely that either institution will object to the nomination of a particular examiner on account of the quality of the examiner, an institution may be aware of a potential conflict of interest which the other institution is not and therefore, each partner has the right to veto the examiners and request new nominations.
- e) Once both institutions have approved the appointment of the examiners, and informed each other of their agreement, the Home institution will write to the examiners to confirm appointment and will explain the examination procedure for the joint degree.

2 Submission of thesis for examination

2.1 Candidates should submit their thesis to the Home institution following the thesis submission requirements of the Home institution. The Home institution is responsible for organising the examination and for sending the thesis to the examiners, keeping the Host institution informed at all stages of the examination process.

For Imperial, the examination entry procedure can be found here:
<http://www3.imperial.ac.uk/registry/exams/examentryforms>

For HKU, the procedure can be found here:
<http://www.gradsch.hku.hk/gradsch/web/student/thesis/index.htm>

3 PhD Oral Examination

- 3.1 The educational needs provisions of the UK Disability Discrimination Act require institutions to make reasonable adjustments for candidates with physical and special learning difficulties in their assessment. Examiners will be advised of any special arrangements for a candidate within their appointment letters.
- 3.2 Candidates must be physically present during the oral examination which will normally be held at the Home institution and conducted according to the Home institution's Regulations.
- 3.3 Normally, all three examiners must be physically present during the oral examination. Exceptions to this may be considered, on a case by case basis, and must have the agreement of both Parties.
- 3.4 For oral examinations taking place at HKU, there will be a Thesis Examining Committee (TEC), comprising the three examiners, the primary supervisor at HKU and a Chairperson. The role of the Chairperson is to ensure that the oral examination is conducted in a proper manner. The supervisor is there as an ex-officio member in order to be able to assist the student with potential revisions to the thesis. The Chairperson and supervisor take no part in the decision making on the award of the degree.
- 3.5 At Imperial, one of the examiners will act as chair of the panel and the supervisor will not be present unless specifically invited by the student. The supervisor does not have the right to participate in the oral examination but may contribute if invited to do so by the examiners. The examiners should note the presence of the supervisor in their joint final report.
- 3.6 In exceptional cases, HKU and Imperial may choose to appoint an independent observer to attend the oral examination.
- 3.7 At both institutions the oral examination will be held in private.

For Imperial, guidelines for the conduct of oral examinations can be found here:
<https://workspace.imperial.ac.uk/registry/Public/Procedures%20and%20Regulations/Regulations/Exam%20Regulations%202012-13/Conduct%20of%20Oral%20Examinations%20for%20Research%20Degrees%20and%20Related%20Matters.pdf>

For HKU, the Guidelines for Setting Up and Conducting Oral Examination for MPhil and PhD Candidates can be found at: <http://www.gradsch.hku.hk/gradsch/web/tec>

- 3.8 Imperial offers guidance to students on preparing for their oral examination which is available online here:
<http://www3.imperial.ac.uk/graduateschool/currentstudents/onlineresources>

HKU provides reference materials on preparing and submitting thesis which can be found here: <http://www.gradsch.hku.hk/gradsch/web/student/thesis/index.htm>

- 3.9 The role of the examiners is to establish whether the thesis is genuinely the work of the candidate and whether the requirements of a PhD thesis have been met. The oral examination should allow:
 - The candidate to defend his/her dissertation and clarify any matters raised by the examiners;
 - The examiners to probe the candidate's knowledge in the field;

- The examiners to assure themselves that the work presented is the candidate's own and to clarify matters of any collaboration; and
 - The examiners to come to a definite conclusion about the outcome of the examination.
- 3.10 At the end of the oral examination, the examiners will prepare a joint final report which indicates their findings and confirms the outcome of the assessment. The outcome will then be communicated to the Host institution who must be provided with a copy of this final report and each individual preliminary report.
- 3.11 At Imperial, if the examiners are unable to reach an agreement, their reports shall be referred to a panel comprising the Director of the Graduate School, a College Consul for the appropriate Faculty and the Academic Registrar (or their nominees). The panel shall determine the action to be taken. For HKU, any contention will be referred to the Chair of the TEC panel to determine if a recommendation should be made to appoint a fourth examiner. Such a recommendation would require approval from Imperial.
- 3.12 Where the examiners determine that minor amendments or further examination is required, this should be completed within a period specified by them and in compliance with the procedures of the Home institution.
- 3.13 Recommendation for the award of a degree cannot be granted until the corrections have been made to the satisfaction of the examiners. If the candidate is required to make substantial changes to the thesis, then the entire examination process starts again, though the assumption is that the same examiners will be appointed.
- 3.14 It should be noted that the maximum time period allowed for re-submission of the thesis will be 12 months where HKU is the Home institution, unless prior approval is given by HKU. The maximum period allowed for re-submission of the thesis will be 18 months where Imperial is the Home institution.

4 Submission of final copy of thesis

- 4.1 Once the examiner(s) have agreed that they are satisfied with the revision(s) and the outcome of the examination has been endorsed by the JDP Committee, candidates may proceed to submit the final thesis to each institution in accordance with their respective requirements.
- 4.2 The requirements for HKU can be found here:
<http://www.gradsch.hku.hk/gradsch/web/student/thesis/index.htm>
- The requirements for Imperial can be found here:
<http://www3.imperial.ac.uk/registry/exams/thesisandvivas>
- 4.3 Where HKU is the Home institution, HKU Graduate School should send a copy of the following to the Deputy Academic Registrar at Imperial College:
- A letter from HKU to confirm that the candidate has completed the requirements in HKU; and
 - A copy of all reports submitted by the Examiners (Preliminary Reports and Joint Final Report).
- 4.4 Once the examination reports and the outcome of the examination has been approved by Imperial College, the candidate may proceed to submit a final copy of his/her thesis to the Deputy Academic Registrar in accordance with Imperial College's requirements.
- 4.5 Where Imperial is the Home institution, Imperial should similarly send a copy of the following to HKU Graduate School:
- A letter from Imperial to confirm that the candidate has completed the requirements in Imperial; and

- A copy of all reports submitted by the Examiners (Preliminary Reports and Joint Final Report).

5 Conferment

- 5.1 The award date will be that of the Home institution. Where HKU is the Home institution, when both institutions have given endorsement, candidates will then be put up for conferment following HKU procedures. A copy of the HKU conferment should be sent to the Deputy Academic Registrar at Imperial College.
- 5.2 Where Imperial is the Home institution, when both institutions have given endorsement, the degree will be awarded in accordance with the College's normal procedure for the award of a research degree. A copy of the Imperial conferment should be sent to the Graduate School at HKU.
- 5.3 Successful candidates are eligible to attend the appropriate degree ceremony at one or both institutions.

6 Degree Scroll

The Home institution will print the degree scroll and transcript. The degree scroll will then be sent by the Registry to the Host institution for embossment of the Seal. The degree scroll will be returned directly to the Registry of Home institution after embossment.

7. Complaints, Appeals and Student Disciplinary Procedures

Complaints

- 7.1 Candidates will follow the Complaints procedures of the Home institution. The Host institution will be kept informed at all stages of the procedure and of the outcome.

For Imperial, the procedure for dealing with complaints by students can be found here:

<http://www3.imperial.ac.uk/registry/proceduresandregulations/policiesandprocedures/complaintsappeals>

For HKU, complaints related to the student's PhD study may be submitted to the Board of Graduate Studies.

Appeals

- 7.2 Candidates will follow the Appeals procedures of the Home institution for appealing against the result of their examination. The Host institution will be kept informed at all stages of the procedure and of the outcome.

For Imperial, the appeals procedures can be found here:

<http://www3.imperial.ac.uk/registry/proceduresandregulations/policiesandprocedures/complaintsappeals>

For HKU, appeals concerning perceived irregularities of the examination procedures should be submitted to the Board of Graduate Studies.

It should be noted that any candidate registered for the joint degree will also be entitled to appeal to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) if they are not satisfied with the outcome of their appeal, but only where the appeal has been dealt with by Imperial.

Student Disciplinary Procedures

- 7.3 Candidates will be subject to student disciplinary procedures of the institution at which they are based when an incident arises. Each institution will inform the other of the proceedings and of the final outcome.

For Imperial, the relevant procedures can be found here:

<http://www3.imperial.ac.uk/registry/proceduresandregulations/policiesandprocedures/disciplinary>

For HKU, the relevant procedures can be found in the University Statutes XXX and XXXI which are available here: <http://www4.hku.hk/pubunit/calendar>

8. IP and Copyright

- 8.1 Candidates own their copyright which is governed by the Home institution's Intellectual Property policies.

For Imperial, the Intellectual Property policies can be found here:

<http://www3.imperial.ac.uk/researchsupport/contractsandip/ippolicypublicaccess>

For HKU, the Intellectual Property policies can be found here:

<http://www.rss.hku.hk/contracts/ipr>

Re: Clause 3.3 of HKU-Imperial Joint PhD Examination Arrangement

1. Since HKU allows examiners to participate in oral examination through video / tele-conferencing (i.e. it is a norm at HKU), therefore if the examiner(s) cannot be physically present at the oral examination and need to participate by video / tele-conferencing, the approval requirement is as follows:

	HKU as Home Institution	Imperial as Home Institution
Approval required from HKU?	No	No
Approval required from Imperial?	Yes	Yes

2. Institution which will be responsible for the travel costs of examiner(s), where necessary, if the examiner(s) attend the oral examination in person:

	HKU as Home Institution	Imperial as Home Institution
Examiner from HKU	Not applicable	Paid by HKU ^{Note 1}
Examiner from Imperial	Paid by Imperial	Not applicable
Examiner external to both institutions	Paid by HKU ^{Note 1}	Paid by Imperial

Notes:

- (1) Costs to be covered by the respective Faculty / Department.
 (2) An honorarium will be paid by the HKU Registry to examiner(s) who are not a Teacher of the University (i.e. the external examiner and the examiner from Imperial).

October 23, 2013 (amended)
 Graduate School, HKU