



Meeting the Needs of Doctoral Examiners: Common Dilemmas

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Some Dilemmas for Debate

From the foregoing, it is clear that some tensions can arise related to the examining of doctoral degrees. Some of the dilemmas that occur during the process are presented here for plenary debate.

Before the task begins...

The benefits and drawbacks of
accepting the role of
examiner.

Criteria used for accepting or
rejecting the role.

Purpose of Task

- Examining the product (mainly the thesis) or the candidate as a researcher (evidence of their developed skills).
- Examining the candidate's achievements or the quality of the support received.

Purpose and Style of Viva

Accepting institutional preference if clear or finding it out if not, or sticking by own standards.

Finding a compromise with other examiners' views on outcome or maintaining own view even in face of conflict.

Decision time

- Balance between maintaining standards of discipline and sensitivity to problems encountered and how dealt with in research process and context.
- Minor or major corrections_ what is do-able in the time that will meet criteria yet leave candidate with maximum dignity.

Post viva

- Degree of support considered appropriate during amendment period from supervisors and examiners